■ Metro/A15
100 Muslim volunteers to guard Manila churches during Holy Week

■ Business/B1
Forex deposits with RP banking system hit record high of $15.49B

■ News/A2
Baritone, pianist delight PDI with classical music

There'll be no Inquirer issues on Friday and Saturday in observance of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Publication resumes Easter Sunday

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Ailing Pope makes 1-minute, silent appearance

VATICAN CITY... Looking pained, Pope John Paul II appeared at his open window Wednesday and blessed the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square.

In the approximately one-minute long appearance, the ailing Pontiff waved his hand in blessing a few times but didn't speak.

The appearance began some 35 minutes after the time the Vatican said it would start. There was no immediate explanation for the delay.

Thousands of pilgrims and tourists looked up from the square to the third floor window John Paul traditionally holds a public audience on Wednesdays, but the Vatican had said on Tuesday that it wouldn't be held this week.

The Pontiff's appearance was anxiously awaited by the faithful after Italian news reports that the 84-year-old leader of the Roman Catholic Church was not responding well to medication.

There reports, which hinted that his condition was worsening, have cast a pall over the Catholic Church's preparations for Easter ceremonies.

The announcement on Tuesday that the audience so popular with pilgrims from around the world would not be held was widely seen as a sign that he was recovering more slowly than expected from throat surgery on Feb. 24 aimed at easing a breathing crisis.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MORAL icon in the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, the world's largest worshiping elected leader, Pope John Paul II, is in prayer in the chapel of Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic Hospital where he was last confined for breathing problems

Erring policemen told to join crucifixion rites

10 sacks of explosives seized

18 canisters of bomb materials also confiscated

Suspect says Abu plans to hit crowded places

By Dona Z. Pazolbuga

IN A NEW campaign of terror, the Abu Sayyaf has sent six elite combatants to Metro Manila to conduct bomb attacks in Metro Manila and on a city in Mindanao in the last week of this month.

The planners included elements within the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, one of whom was paid P100,000 to help carry out the attacks.

Captured Sayyaf commander Jumper Jhilmar, also known as Zaki, made these disclosures in one of rare interviews which the military allowed media to have with suspected terrorists.

According to Pelmian, top ASG leader Ghaddy Jacjaluo and Commander Abu

BOMB expert Lt. Col. Lito Tolentino holds up one of 18 canisters of suspected explosives found in Fairview, Quezon City.

By Dona Pazolbuga

PACKED in 10 sacks, they could have been used to make a car bomb with enough power to blow up a two-story building or maim an untold number of people if set off in a crowded place.

They were intended to be used to bomb "soft" or lightly guarded targets in Metro Manila, possibly this Holy Week.

The military said yesterday these were the key elements of a major plot by the Abu Sayyaf Group to sow terror in the metropolis this coming week but also had been thwarted with the seizure of the explosives and the arrest of one plotter.

The discovery of the explosives coincided with warnings from diplomats that terrorists were "on the final stages of planning an attack" in the country.

Besides the 18 cracks of explosives, intelligence agents also confiscated 34 detonators of improvised explosive devices, one personal computer and a video camera with several tapes in an apartment on Lilac Street, in Fairview, Quezon City.

The military presented the explosives to media at Camp Aguinaldo during a nationwide alert against extraordinary attacks by the Abu Sayyaf following the killing of 22 suspected ASG members during a failed jailbreak last week.

"The explosives are intended to be used during the Lenten season to hostile anti-terror activities Metro Manila," the military said.

Police station and possible targets included churches, malls and other heavily populated places.

An alleged conspirator, Tyrone Dave Santos, also known as Jamil Sarona, was also apprehended in Cubao, Quezon City.

Santos' arrest led to the discovery of the explosives in Fairview, Quezon City, officials said.

"The capture of Santos and the sub-

Today's view: What conflict of interest?

By Fe B. Zamora

SEE TEODORO "Teddyboy" Locsin Jr. wrote unedited in the "merchants of stories" which he and publisher of Today, former Today editor in chief Lourdes "Chuchay" Hernandez and yesterday, defending Locsin from accusations that facing publisher and publisher at the same time was a "conflict of interest."

Locsin was accused of having a "conflict of interest" by the Manila Standard Employees Association (MSEA), who opposed his appointment as publisher of the Manila Standard Today, a broadsheet that combined the Manila Standard which is majority-owned by businessman Enrique Razon, and Today, which locals owned with Singapore Tony Boy Cojuangco.

Fernandez, who has assumed the position as co-managing editor of the Manila Standard Today, said that Santos' dismissal of instance when Teddyboy actually meddled with the editors on the treatment of a story."

"That's why I am completely

Cardinal's passion: Visiting poor in village of Sin

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PEAK figure adjusting from the white sedan is an all-too-familiar sight to residents of this poor community in Pasay, Sta. Ana, Manila.

At least three times a week, retired Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin visits this place which some have aptly called "the Village of Sin."

When he comes, the people receive him like a celebrity, if not a king.

He, 76, has made the two-hectare Cardinal Sin Village his second home away from Villa San Miguel, his Mandaluyong mission for more than three decades.

He built the village for some 500 residents of Pasay, one of the poorest communities in the capital city, soon after he retired from the Archdiocese of Manila two years ago.

"This is where he now finds the strength to withstand the exertions of a lingering kidney ailment and heart problem.

"He comes usually on the morning and sometimes feels rejuvenated just by observing the scurrying," said Peachy Tamayao, the communications director of the Archdiocese of Manila.

He usually arrives not later than 8 a.m. As soon as he gets off the car, children would become around him, becoming his instant entourage as he goes on a tour of the village, climbing on the dose as and the ongoing construction.

"He really loves the kids," said

Luminous Cross of Grace rising in Quezon town

HERE'S reformer Fr. Raul "Paul" Soriquez with a scale model of "God's masterpiece."

By Ruby Villamonte Pisarski
Correspondent

A TOWER of lights is rising in Agdangan, an obscure, coastal town in Quezon province not known for any historic landmark, fortress, or delicacy.

Named the Luminous Cross of Grace Sanctuary, it is being built on land adjoining the town's first hidden Labrador Parish Church.

When completed, it will soar 120 feet, like 12 stories high with a panoramic view of Mt. Banahaw and the plains of Quezon and Tayabas Bay.

The sanctuary is designed to look like a monstrance with the circular figure of the host (eucharist at its center).

On top of the dome will sit an eight-meter high cross that will be visible for kilometers around.

At night, it will be illuminated by a 1,000-foot light beam powered by a solar generator and spot lights at its base.

FACES: Christ and artist Ray Custodio

Jesus' faces subsidize missionaries

By D.J. Yap
and Minerva Gonzales

SOME 300 wood sculptures depicting the face of Jesus in various moods have given a new lease on life and work of a group of missionaries in Quezon.

The sculptures were made by Ray Boy Custodio, who is also known for his pro-people and pro-Filipino art. He has donated the sculptures, which have since become known as "Rostros de Jesus" (from the Spanish word rostro, meaning face) to the Missionaries of Jesus group.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Road to VAT becoming war path for senators, top Palace execs

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

APPARENTLY fed up with the delay in the passage of the bill to restructure the value-added tax system, Malacañang yesterday declared senators for doing a "Pontius Pilate" and washing their hands of their primary duty to raise taxes and solve the fiscal crisis.

A top Malacañang official, who asked not to be identified, said the senators were ahead of having their chances of reelection and were now passing on the burden of approving an increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent to President Benigno Aquino III.

This came as the 10-based incumbent Bank Credit Senate from Boston said it believed the Senate might be set to seek a compromise to break the VAT deadlock by giving the President authority to raise the VAT rate.

"In times of fiscal distress and high debt service costs, our representatives on the ground indicate that the Philippine Constitution does allow the President to assign tax policy. In this way, the Senate passes on the back of a possible populist backlash to the President. Meanwhile, the Presidency can claim victory highlighting that she's able to implement tough tax measures," UBS said in its March 12 report.

The Malacañang official said the senators not only know that approving tax reforms was part of their duty, they know also how much support they will lose in terms of the VAT reforms in solving the country's fiscal woes.

"They cannot act like Pontius Pilate on this issue, this is important to our country," the official said, blaming the senators for the weak number and growth fall.

Although the Malacañang official did not mention any senator by name, it was obvious that the Palace was targeting the Presidency's supposed allies in the chamber who have refused to give their approval to a VAT rate hike for fear of hurting their chances in the 2013 elections.

The redistricter senators belonging to the administration coalition are Senators Jinkee Pacquiao, Ahmad Villar, Gringo Pangilinan and Ralph Recto.

These four senators have keeping the VAT rate at 10 percent while weakening the removal of VAT exemptions enjoyed by petty classes and power firms and professionals. They claimed this would be enough to meet the President's goal of raising P99 billion in new revenues.

There were high hopes after the May 13 elections that the President would have no issues later pushing her legislative reform program when her allies emerged victorious in the congressional and Senate races.

But this turned out to be a matter of false hopes as the senators, who are elected at large, have made a big show of being independent of the Executive and of producing to populist issues.

After the Senate failed to pass in session of the VAT reform bill before the chamber took a Lenten vacation, the President piled on the pressure by declaring that the implementation of her program requires wide deposition on the approval of the bicameral conference measure, particularly the VAT rate hike.

Malacañang also warned that every week of delay in the passage of the VAT would cost the government P1.25 billion in foregone revenues.

The President also called Congress in a three-day special session from March 19 to April 1 specifically to work on the passage of the VAT bill.

House Assistant Majority Leader Sorsogon Cong. Evelina Escudero yesterday disclosed fears that the House would not be able to muster a quorum for the special session.

Senator Antonio Trillanes said the special session was useless because the House could not muster a quorum anyway. With a report from Philip C. Tubeza

BARROS

VILLAR

PANGILINAN

RECTO

Transport strike set Easter Sunday vs NLEx toll

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A United Luzon-wide transport strike to begin at 12:01 a.m. on Monday will test the filing of a case asking the Supreme Court to nullify the contract of the Manila North Tollways Corp. to operate the North Luzon Expressway, transport leaders launched on Wednesday.

At liturgical services by jeepney, bus, auto-bus and motorcycle federations going to a hold, a big contingent of the regional PISTON-KMU drivers will start a motorcade by 9 a.m. to file the case before the Supreme Court, said Tom Salazar, national spokesperson of the Federation ng mga Tsuper at Operator sa Pilipinas (FTOP).

The strike-ing Alyansang Makabayan at Transport Sector Laban sa Mga Toll Fee Hike (Alma), the alliance to which STOP belongs, is open to using the legal option.

Fifth case

It is the fifth case filed by several groups, including Bulacan Rep. Philharlito Fernando, since Feb. 18 when the MNTC took over the management of the 84-km highway from the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.

Protesting a vital infrastructure is already a questionable action of the way to government for abandoning its role to provide services, this is also prove the rule of the NLEx franchise between the government and the MNTC that it is executed entered without any public bidding and is unprecedented approval," said Antero Bengzal of the Ednesa para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, anuhi, at iba-iba pang.

Bengzal said PISTON's franchise would reach as far as 2107.

The MNTC earlier said the franchise is still vetted by the PPEC, which is a member of the joint venture. The others are the First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. of the Lucio Co group, the Ayala Projects of Ayala and the Singapore-based Gammon of Australia.

Rates approved

The project's Supplemental Toll Rate Increase Agreement (Strea), signed by former President Fidel Ramos in 1998, mandated the operating partnership of Ednesa, rehabilitate, operate and maintain the NLEx for 30 years.

The MNTC requested spending P1.1 billion on the rehabilitation, widening and facilities.

"It has become more of a business venture instead of a service," Bengzal said.

The MNTC pegged the increase to toll rates at 500 percent from PECC's rates. The new rates prompted a 9% to P20 increase in fares for jeepneys and buses plying the improved highway.

Meanwhile, Bengzal said that the Legal-ted MNTC on "secrecy in establishment four years of operations." 098 Control Lucas Real-

Baritone, pianist treat PDI to classics

Surprise employees were invited last Tuesday to the amazing sight of a grand piano being carried by 10 musicians, the 24 steps to the PDI building's second-floor lobby.

The occasion was a special performance by baritone Noel Arcenas, the first time that the Ipamas was hosting a full recital by a baritone.

Accompanied the Holy Tuesday concert quite aptly with the Rhodes ensemble.

He was accompanied by pianist Najib Ismail in a repertoire that included Schubert, Donizetti, Carissimi, Leoncavallo and Rhodes's, among others.

"The special performance is a welcome respite, coming as it does toward the end of the first quarter and before we go on our annual Lenten break," said publisher Inquirer Sandoz.

Sandoz said Arcenas's voice was "unchangeably world-class."

"Mr. PDI wanted was a real big treat," said PDI Interviewer Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc.

"It's good singing there," and because who wanted that the PDI building lacks excellent acoustics.

A member of the renowned UST Singers, Arcenas made his first solo recital at the 3rd Pong Soriano Music Festival last year and was promptly declared "the most exciting baritone of the year."

He was given a standing ovation in Cagayan during the opening of the first of the Philippines Concert Tour currently.

A bass-turn specialist at Saturday's concert was PDI vendor Da Leticia Epelle Tolentino who had drawn all the way from San Jose to it.

"Arcenas's voice really made my day. I am glad I made it to this concert," she said.

Arcenas and Ismail will perform in the Buenos City of Malolos-Bulacan Sunday, March 17. The Calandanes performed performance, under Gov. Joselito Mendoza, will be presenting the duo in a concert in Tuao the following Sunday, April 3.

Arcenas is all set to leave for another international tour with the UST singers under professor Pablo Grano Calalang Jr. Pablo A. Tarrosos, Contributor

BARITONE Noel Arcenas and pianist Najib Ismail rendering the Inquirer's second-floor lobby into a concert hall on a Holy Tuesday

GMA, Cabinet hear Mass, reflect on Holy Week in Palace retreat

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her Cabinet gathered on Holy Tuesday, taking time out to hear Mass, pray and reflect for the Holy Week.

The four-hour spiritual retreat, held inside Bahay Pangarap along Malacañang Park, saw the President and her official family hearing Mass, praying and listening to songs and spiritual talk.

"It was private in the President's retreat but it was open to Cabinet members and a few friends of the President," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Aside from Bunye, among the Cabinet members present were Vice President and Housing Secretary Noli de Castro, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes, and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Gonzalez said that a priest gave them a crucifix good talk.

"We talked about not only about our duties as public officials but also of redemption," Gonzalez said in a phone interview Tuesday night.

He said aside from Cabinet members, also present were the president staff.

Malacañang also was not immediately available for comment on the President's activities during the Holy Week.

PHOTO SEMINAR
THE BEST: Couple pose for a picture with members of the Photo Photographers of the Philippines, led by it's president, Inquirer's Boy Cabrido, during the PPP's annual "Photojournalism Impact" seminar. Ms. Arroyo and husband Mike, a photo enthusiast, attended the seminar and expressed interest in the photojournalists' work. ALEJANDRO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo (at rear) in hard hat walking the grounds of urban poor communities, like those in the Pier 18 hub site in Barangay Tagpang, Malabon City. MALACAÑANG

Leftist solon makes Lenten appeal to GMA: Stop killings

By Philip Tubeo

ANAKPAWIS party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano yesterday made a Lenten appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo: stop the killing of leftist activists.

Mariano made the call after another activist, human rights lawyer Cleofe Jalosjos, was killed by unidentified assailants on Tuesday in Arteaga, La Union while he was on his way to the wake of another slain militant.

Jalosjos survived the attack but suffered six gunshot wounds. Since the beginning of the year, 18 leftist activists have been killed in the country.

"It appears that Ms Macapagal is not disturbed by the series of attacks against legitimate people's organizations in her phone instant to command the killings!" Mariano said.

"Up to now, the President has no clear and categorical statement on the spate of killings of political activists," he added.

Mariano said Jalosjos was on his way to the wake of Rony Sanchez, Bayan Muna core cluster for the Ilocos region, who was killed last March 26 in Dagupan City.

Jalosjos, also the convenor of the Tumbok for Rony Sanchez Movement," was set to talk with leaders of militant groups in Ilocos.

Mariano said the killings of activists in places considered to be the safest for activists.

"The message of the killings is very loud and clear. Those were meant to incite terror on the militant people's movement," he added.

4-day workweek seen answer to fund woes

By Reena N. Gamalinga

GOVERNMENT employees would enjoy long weekends in the next two months as Malacañang announced it was implementing a four-day workweek for national government agencies to save on electricity and fuel expenses.

Energy Secretary Raphael Perl Lotilla said in a press briefing yesterday the Department of Budget and Management was expected soon work to issue the implementing rules for the program, which would run from April 7 to the end of May.

Lotilla said the timing would avoid the period when electricity consumption is at its peak due to increased use of air conditioners, fans and other appliances for cooling buildings and work areas.

He said the government's total demand for power increases by 100 megawatts for every one-degree centigrade increase in temperature. In turn, the increased consumption translates to 125 barrels of fuel per hour.

"It stands that the quality of government service would not be compromised, the program is designed such that government employees would still work at a minimum of 40 hours a week," he said.

Lotilla said the Cabinet was considering extending the workday to five daylight hours. "It may be possible to start the day at 6 a.m. for instance," he said.

But he said there would be no changes in the work schedule of those conducting "frontline" services, such as hospital personnel.

"The scheme would be applied in agencies where it is applicable," he said.

Lotilla said the four-day workweek would enable employees to save on transport and other expenses.

"This would also give more quality time to their families and encourage them to use their three-day breaks for other social and economic activities," he said.

"We are doing this not because there is a direct supply of a possible crisis regarding fuel," Lotilla said. "This is all about savings."

The official said the temporary scheme was expected to translate into a reduction of the national agencies' power and fuel consumption by 10 percent.

He said a study showed that an office, such as the Department of Energy with about 600 employees, could save an estimated P306,000 in electricity costs and P63,000 in fuel expenses if it followed a four-day work week for two months.

"This would require a change in our lifestyle and in the way we do things," Lotilla said.

Loi gets ally in Palace on US detention

LOI BERCILLO

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG yesterday found itself siding with opposition Rep. Loi Bercillo over the way the latter was treated by US immigration personnel upon her arrival in California last March 20.

"We are united and we acknowledge the statement of (US) Ambassador (Francis) Ricciardone expressing regrets and...assurances that this will be looked into," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye said Filipino lawmakers "deserve some respect in foreign soil in the same manner that all foreign government officials and diplomats enjoy the respect and courtesies due them in our country."

Ignacio denounced the shabby treatment given her by US immigration personnel who detained and interrogated her for one and a half hours.

She arrived in San Francisco with her daughter and grandchildren last March 20.

Ricciardone and the US state department in Washington have since apologized.

POLLUTION

Dead fish litter the pond whose waters contain high levels of pollutants from surrounding industrial firms in Labogon Mandaue City in Central Philippines. The injustice one's is reflected on the water.

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US pro-life leader warns of abortion in new bill

By Christer V. Esguerra

HOT legalized contraception, Sen Legalized abortion.

An American pro-life activist has warned the government against passing the controversial Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Management Act of 2005 (House Bill 3773), saying it would eventually pave the way for an abortion law.

"All 118 countries that legalized contraception eventually legalized abortion," said Dr. Brian Clowes, Human Life International's manager for outreach, told the Inquirer.

Contraception are a key part of HB 3773, now being deliberated at the House of Representatives, along with the so-called "three-style" divorce law filed by party-list Rep. Liza Maza.

Clowes cited the purported experience of the United States after it let government-produced contraceptives in 1965.

At least 28,000 deaths due to complications from birth control pills have been recorded while a quarter of American women using injectable started at age 25 have "hysterable" (sexually transmitted disease), he claimed.

Not effective

That's because condoms, for instance, were not as effective as their promoters had claimed, he explained.

"So, you can use condoms to have a child and pregnancy," he said in a former law week. "But you have to wear 33 of them. Or the mathematics and you'll be safe."

For all its supposedly bad documents, Clowes said the US government now spends $700 million daily to "clean up after the public health implications of all these sick (sic) to and with the practices."

"We have to the Philippines on more and if this is going to be another American mess: no different from the US, there would be no reason for me to come back because the country would have lost its magic," he said.

Clowes also recommends about abortion increased. Rep. Carmelo Bautoncio of the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP).

In the forum organized by the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, the American suggested that Bautoncio's group could be unwittingly advocating abortion on the basis of its affiliation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In his "Katotgas Report 2004," an expose on the US government's purported hand in the population-control policies of World Vision, Clowes described the IPPF as the "largest international promoter of abortion and other means of family planning."

Based in London, the IPPF has more than 180 family planning movement's worldwide, including the FPOP.

Clowes said a provision in the Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of which the IPPF is a signatory, says that "all women have the right to comprehensive health care services including access to all methods of fertility regulation, including safe abortion."

Bautoncio said his group has its "own guidelines in the Philippines" not necessarily similar to the IPPF's.

"Since (she is), sir, that in the Philippines, abortion is a criminal act," he explained. "As members of any international, we have the right to remain against the mission of the mother organization."

SPREADING GOD'S WORD

200,000 OFWs seen potential missionaries

By Christine Esguerra

THE COUNTRY'S acknowledged modern-day heroes could soon be its newest set of missionaries.

Around 200,000 Overseas Filipino Workers are being mobilized to reach as "God's mission nations" in at least 134 countries, according to the head of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

"What we want to see is that every Filipino who leaves to work abroad should not go there only to earn dollars," Bishop Efraim Tendero told the Inquirer in a recent interview.

"They should also be able to see themselves as God's ambassadors wherever they are."

Unlike regular preachers, OFWs would not find much difficulty getting into "closed" countries—not like us.

Tendero said the idea of tapping OFWs came more than five years ago. But it was only now that there is a concerted effort among the PCEC's 30,000 affiliates churches, following a number of "success stories" abroad, he said.

In Hong Kong in early 2000, a female domestic helper confronted buried with the child of her Chinese employers soon after she made him watch a film about Jesus one Sunday morning.

"Who's Jesus?" the boy asked his "boss" after he saw the part wherein Jesus was depicted as calming the storm.

"After that, (she) made the storm go away so I could go to school!"

The Filipino workers knelt and prayed. The rain stopped.

"When the parents arrived, the boy told them about Jesus." Tendero said, citing the OFW for her fearless total missionary work.

Another story was about an OFW working also as a helper for a family in a Middle Eastern country.

"She was teaching the children about the Bible so her employers got mad and kicked her out," Tendero said.

"But they came over for her in the Philippines if only to appease their kids who had been crying since she left."

In addition, Filipinos are in a good position to become "bi-vocational" or "tent-maker missionaries," he said, referring to the Apostle Paul's missionary work that were made his living a tent-maker in Corinth in the New Testament.

As while they work as, say, nurses and engineers, they could also be "used to spread the message of Jesus Christ," he said.

Chosen OFWs would go through missionary education to equip them with the proper "skills, character, and knowledge," he said.

84 die (10 year of kite flying in Malate town, inmates show their kites, including Ed Serrano's MDF design entries.

Colors of kites from jail fill Mindoro skies

By Madonna T. Virola
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CITY OF CALAPAN—These days, one would usually see different colors in the sky here and in other parts of Mindoro island.

At this time of year, kites of different colors, sizes and shapes dominate the Mindoro sky.

Today, there will be a kite flying contest in Naujan town on Easter Sunday.

Kite flying a pastime for Jan. 1 to Jan. and consists of the Provincial Windsurfing Federation Ltd. (PWSF).

They should know. They are the ones who make and sell their wares to one of their sweet forms of livelihood, making PM 2.5 bath time at a jail under the new entrepreneurial leadership of retired Supt. Rolando D. Custodio, now the provincial warden.

There are 325 inmates here, 30 are women. Majority of the inmates are facing illegal drug-related cases.

"The kite-making project is an alternative to making Christmas lanterns out of shoes, which were recruited," said Custodio. The 1,000 inmates have made a name in Christmas decors.

Innovative

More parents also come to the jail these days as children insist on class parents to take them to jail and buy them kites of their preferred designs. Batman and Superman designs sell like hot cakes.

Kite come in two major national designs: a butterfly and a bird. They are being named the shades at the jail compound.

Inmates interview with colors and names of their kite body.

The latest is the design of a box kite recently at P1.00. The prices range from P50 to P1.00.

"The cheapest price is good for small kids, just to be placed to them as an alternative," said to run in a small space," said inmate Ciprano Bhaskaran, 44.

Fees four interns, 3, was very happy with her kite. "I wish Daadtawa," she said.

Scare

Bonifacio Fernandez, assistant provincial warden, said kite-making here was started by Elmer Ani, 52, in 1998.

"PNP (prison guard 2) Dennis Mesa brought samples from Pinamalayan jail and we made them as models," said Ani.

There are three jails in the province: the DRPC, the one in Pinamalayan, with 91 inmates, and the other in Naujan, which has 53 inmates.

The Naujan jail inmates are not producing kites because the space there is only about 100 square meters. Pinamalayan jail is about 400-800 sqm and the DRPC is about 2,000 sqm.

Fernandez said that last year, a big yellow kite with phrases, "Provincial Jail" and "Love to enjoy" printed on it, were taken out for a test by three people.

It successfully flew but crashed later.

Each kite is tested for quality. Whenever it drops, it is given another chance.

But there are kids who have returned the rented kites to the jail, knowing that there be charged to the inmates.

Income

"I have earned P6,000 gross (P2,500 net) since January this year. I have a helper and I can finish five kites in a day," said Macalalad.

The materials per kite is P20. P8. P10 for black garbage plastic, while the rest of the amount is for bamboo sticks, mosquito killer for gluing and nylon thread.

Garbage plastic with other colors is priced at P15. When bought inside the jail, it is P10.

Macalalad sells a kite at P70 to a sales agent, usually a fellow inmate.

The father of a barangay captain here, who refused to be named, gives bamboo pieces to inmates for kite making. Some jail visitors bring pieces of bamboo for the detainees.

An average kite is made in four hours. Or an inmate, Macalalad's entire room P500 after six days of work.

"We take 15 from the authorized seller for the inmates' funds. More than P400 have been collected, including those from the their families," said Fernandez.

Like another inmate, Rolen Mendoza, Macalalad continues working in the evening in his cell.

NDF kites

Eduardo Serrano, who tells himself a political detainee, donated his kites with the NDF (National Democratic Front) design.

"Some kites (about two are made of tough cloth-tested will be used in a rally in Manila on April 20, during the anniversary of the NDF," he said.

He explained that the three sizes is made so kite are for kaisa. Visayan and Mindanao. A kites in the middle of the triangle means unity and change. The colors of the Philippine flag are used, except that the red color is orange, to symbolize war.

"I," he "Jalayan!" President arrest the lions.

"Others imitate, and some improve their designs, like tying on or may poking any ads up around," said Serrano.

"This is a skill that could be used after jail. Bigtime me, may alam ka, magagawa mo rin ang mga ito (When an inmate is released, he knows something, he could produce one for his kids)," said Macalalad, who never had a kite as a boy.

Other livelihood

More than half of the jail's population are hooked into kite-making.

But for those who are not inclined to kite making, there are the loaners to be made out of cardo-stalk, cardo-linear making, a cardo-like mini-store there is a typewriter inside as each of the eight cells was given P 1,000 capital by Gonzales), making of food by a women's group chaired by Pinky Gonzales, shoemaking and carving for repair, and laundry services.

"With several livelihood projects here, only the lazy ones will not earn," said Fernandez.

Those interested in the projects may contact the DRPC at 043.288.7116.

2 legislators urge bigger gov't share in Malampaya

By Michael Lim Ubac

TWO congressmen yesterday called on Malacañang to increase government's share in the Malampaya Natural Gas Project in Palawan after a ranking Senate official said it could now give discounts on oil prices to developing countries like the Philippines.

Representatives Antonio C. Alvarez (1st district, Bataan) and Jacinto Paras (1st district, Negros Occidental) said that the government should invest heavily on local sources of energy to lessen its dependence on imported oil.

Visiting Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Ali bin Ibrahim al-Naimi said on Monday that world crude oil prices were too high for his country could not do anything to ease prices even if it raised its output.

After a luncheon meeting with President Maanpagal Arroyo in Malacañang, Al-Naimi, chair of Saudi Aramco which holds a 40 percent stake in the country's biggest oil refiner Petron Corp., said oil prices were high because the world could still produce enough to meet consumption if it is discount even to developing countries.

Garage sale

Alvarez and Paras then called the attention of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the reported failure of the energy department to sell 6.5 percent of the total shares in the Malampaya Natural Gas Project in Palawan to Australia's Woodside Petroleum Ltd. The Philippine government through the Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp.

They said the move was unjustified as it will run counter to the policy of developing alternative sources of energy to soften the impact of rising world crude oil prices.

The two lawmakers disclosed that the Arroyo administration's move to sell its shares in the project for "only" $200 million, "a price that is not as par with present market value."

The two filed a resolution last week seeking an investigation by the House committee on government corporations on oversight "on what could possibly be another sweetheart deal" between the government and a foreign entity.

Negotiated bidding

Alvarez and Paras said that the sale—besides being supposedly underpriced—would be made through a negotiated bidding.

The lawmakers said that from the Malampaya in Palawan to some power generators in Luzon.

"The privatization of the shares does not seem to be advantageous to the government as the ruling that is considering that the Malampaya Natural Gas Project a source of income of the GOP (Government of the Philippines) that is actually earning revenues for the government," Alvarez and Paras said in their resolution.

They said that another important aspect of the whole transaction was the alleged assessment made by the buyers company in Singapore that it was the "premium" price for the shares.

They also said that the Philippine government had not made any official announcement that it was negotiating with any group for the sale of the Malampaya shares.

Job seekers told: Have legal papers for Malaysia

By Jerome Aning

THERE are plenty of jobs available to migrant workers in Malaysia and Filipinos need only to undergo the necessary legal processes to be able to get them, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said yesterday.

Sto. Tomas' reaction followed reports that Filipinos were again sneaking back to Malaysia without any documentation. She stressed the seven priorities that would be meted out illegally staying and undocumented aliens under Malaysia's new immigration laws.

Human rights groups said 10 Filipinos caught illegally staying in Malaysia are whipped.

The DOLE chief called on 84 Filipino workers who wanted to go back to Malaysia to first register and acquire proper papers at the agency's one-stop processing center in Zamboanga City and Bongao, Tawi-tawi.

The secretary, citing the report of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Kuala Lumpur, said many job vacancies await returning migrant workers in many Malaysian industries, particularly in companies manufacturing.

Labor shortage

Malaysian Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr. Fong Chan Onn said the small land-locked country has 320,000 foreign workers—including even the Indian-Muslim construction—now banned his by the sudden departure of their undocumented workers following 24, during the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist raid.

He explained that the three times to make his new law Labour Ministers and Ambassador. A shifts in the middle of the triangle means unity and change. The colors of the Philippine flag are used, except that the red color is orange, to symbolize war.

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The WORLD

Editor Lorente B. Gueco

Arabs to relaunch peace offer to Israel

ALGIERS—Arab leaders agreed on Tuesday to relaunch a Middle East peace initiative offering Israel normal relations in return for withdrawal to its 1967 borders, officials said at a summit meeting in Algiers.

The formal relaunch of the 2002 initiative, which Israel has repeatedly rejected, will take place on Wednesday in the closing session of the two-day meeting, they said.

But all 22 members of the Arab League have agreed on a final communique which sets out the conditions Israel must meet for all Arab states to declare the Arab-Israeli conflict over.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Jean al-Arkki said that the final communique had been approved and would be officially endorsed on Wednesday.

Jordan was the driving force behind the relaunch, designed to show Israeli and international public opinion that the Arab states have peaceful intentions.

But Israel said on Monday that the plan was a "non-starter" and Arab states should meet separately with Washington's response was lukewarm.

"The United States, as a matter of policy, supports 'as Israel a recognition of Israel as possible," State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said.

But asked why the US was not speaking supportively of the Arab proposal, Ereli said: "I'm not speaking unsupportively of it. I'm just saying that I'm not aware that this proposal right now is going anywhere."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters that the Arab summit would send a small group of Arab leaders to present the plan to the Quartet of international mediators—the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia.

The United States, which dominates the Quartet, fears the initiative that Israel and its neighbors should fix borders through negotiations.

Mullki said earlier that asking the summit to reissue the peace initiative was having the effect Jordan wanted.

"It has stirred things up. The whole world now remembers that there is no Arab peace initiative," he told reporters.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, a guest at the opening, said he saw a change in the Arab position.

"It (the initiative) is more constructive, (more) than ever before. I think there is movement. We cannot forget or close the previous positions of the Arab League were," he said.

Jordan had tried to complete the 2002 initiative, adopted at an Arab summit in Beirut, to make it more appealing to Israeli and international public opinion.

But the other Arab countries insisted on spelling out in detail the conditions Israel must meet—including withdrawal, a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

Opposition to any substantial amendment means there was no chance that Israel would try to obtain normal relations with Arab countries without giving anything in return.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa told the opening session of the summit that this should not happen.

"Israel will imagine that rights will be forgotten... (and) that the Arabs will accept concessions without any equivalent worth considering. It cannot happen without something really in return," he said.

Mullki also gave a unanimous or collective thrill line with Israel, although Jordan, along with Egypt, is one of the only Arab countries to have an embassy in the Israeli state.

"It's a clear message that there is no normalization before Israel takes all the measures requested of it," he said.

But Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the chairman of the summit, said that Israel with the attitude of Israel the Arabs must show the world their peaceful intentions.

"We must make the international community the conscience of the world and the Jewish people itself bear witness to the strategic option of the Arab states for peace," he said.

The attendance at the meeting, at 13 ministerial and presidential from the 22 Arab League members, is about average for these summits, which Gulf Arab rulers often skip. Reuters

SUNSET VIEW FROM THE VOLCANO
Visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park near Volcano, Hawaii, gather near sunset March 11, as lava from Kilauea Volcano reaches the Pacific Ocean.

EU split on Chinese arms ban

BRUSSELS—China's tougher stance on Taiwan threatened to derail European Union efforts to boost ties with Beijing on Tuesday as divisions flared over a proposed ban on arms sales.

Splits emerged in the bloc as France defended the move, terming US fears it would lead to a flood of arms sales.

But diplomats said a Chinese law against independence moves in Taiwan had made others, including Britain, more wary and that a lifting of the ban would now probably be delayed.

"It is clear that China has not fulfilled the preconditions for lifting the embargo, notably by not easing tensions in the region," said one EU diplomat in Brussels.

"I would not expect a decision any time soon," said a senior Polish diplomat, adding that the United States was unhappy with EU statements planned to arms sales once the ban is lifted.

China and the embargo, imposed after Beijing's bloody crackdown in 1989 of protesters during the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, was outlawed and urged the EU to address its grievances or face consequences.

"It's unreasonable to link China pushing the EU to lift the arms embargo and China passing the anti-secession law," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told reporters in Beijing, insisting the legislation was not aimed at war.

Any delay would be warmly welcomed by the United States, which has pledged to defend Taiwan in the event of an attack.

However diplomats said no decision had been taken on the issue and that France was highlighting only the end-June target.

Foreign Minister Dominique Galouzeau de Villepin would not host an easier arms request, which are subject to a variety of other national and EU-level restrictions.

"Lifting the embargo does not mean selling arms," he told the European Union's Arab Institute.

"The European factor no intention of launching a policy of arms exports to China, which is not asking for this. When the time comes we will decide politically in liaison with China," he said in the interview, distributed in Paris by his office.

The arms ban was set formally on the agenda of an EU summit on Tuesday but diplomats said decisions could change in essence.

China and others in Europe are boosting trade and diplomatic ties with China as a way of counter-balancing US power in the world. He were the banking of other EU leaders but Germany to prepare the lifting of the embargo by June 30. Reuters

Kyrgyz leader refuses to resign amid rising opposition protests

BISHKEK—Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev refused Tuesday to resign or annul the results of disputed parliamentary elections but ruled out the use of force to quell a week of mounting opposition protests.

Accusing opposition leaders of attempting to stage a coup, Akayev said they talks were the only way out of a crisis that has turned the apparently ex-Soviet former Russian backed in Central Asia.

"It's obvious that there is no basis and that there cannot be any talk of an annulment of the parliamentary elections," he said in a televised address.

"We cannot put the legitimacy of newly elected deputies to doubt just because someone wants it so."

Akayev, a 60-year-old physicist by training who has ruled the impoverished mountainous nation since 1990, lectured opposition defenders to order.

"Only the people or parliament can make such a decision and we are not going to hold any negotiations on this point," he said. "They aren't any reasons for me to step down, because you can't use criminality to remove legally elected authorities."

His comments followed a week of intense protests after a March 13 runoff election that saw the opposition presence in the 75-member parliament reduced to a mere handful of seats.

While Akayev has been regarded as the most liberal of rulers in the region, he has faced increasing criticism in recent years and charges that his relatives would involve influence in Kyrgyzstan's economy and politics.

Two election children new parliamentary seats.

The country's electoral commission Sunday declared elections held in 69 districts as valid, with complaints in five others still to be examined in court and another region to hold the poll within a month.

The opposition in Kyrgyzstan views local administration rigged the poll in order to pack the chamber with his supporters ahead of a presidential election in October.

The chiefs of OSCE and Inter-Ahead in the impoverished south near the border with Uzbekistan have been the front of the demonstrations, which have seen protesters seize several government buildings, police stations and airports. AFP

Minnesota school shooting rampage probed

RED LAKE, Minnesota—Authorities were trying to determine what caused a teenager to gun down his grandfather, put on the man's police officer uniform and apparently drive to his destination to kill.

Jeff Weise, 16, killed nine people and wounded seven Monday before leading gunfire with a police officer and apparently shooting himself. His motive still wasn't clear Tuesday, but the FBI said the shootings appeared to have been planned in advance.

It was the nation's worst school shooting since the Columbine massacre in April 1999 that ended with the deaths of 12 students, a teacher and the two teen gunmen.

The killings on the northern Minnesota Indian reservation began at the home of Weise's grandfather, Daryl Lussier, 58, who was shot to death with a .22-caliber gun, according to Michael Tolman, the FBI special agent in charge for Minneapolis. Also killed was Lussier's companion, Michelle Spanu.

Lussier had worked as a tribal police officer for decades. Weise then drove the elder man's squad car to the school, where he gunned down more by guard Derrick Brun at the front and opened about 16 runaway inside, targeting people at random.

Hearing the shots, students and adults barricaded themselves into offices and classrooms and crouched under desks, authorities said. A teacher and five students were shot to death, and ten. Some also remained in critical condition in a Bemgi, North Dakota hospital with gunshot wounds to the face.

"Right now we are in crisis mode, belief and shock," said Floyd Jourdain Jr., chair of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa.

Authorities were investigating whether Weise, who dressed in black and wrote stories about zombies, may have posted messages on a neo-Nazi website espousing admiration for Adolf Hitler.

Using the handle "Nightmare32" —German for "Angel of Death"— the writer identified himself to Jeff Weise of the Red Lake Reservation. In April 2004, he referenced having accessed "a firearm on the school I attend," though it says he was later cleared.

Tolman said Tuesday he couldn't confirm whether Weise was the person who made the postings.

School board member Kathryn Shanchez said Weise had been placed in the school's Home Bound program for a policy violation. She did not elaborate.

Relatives said the 16-year-old was a loner who was often teased by others. They said his father committed suicide eight years ago and his mother was living in a Minneapolis nursing home because the suffered brain injuries in a car accident.

The Star Tribune of Minneapolis reported in its Wednesday editions that the boy's father, Dale E. Lussier Jr., killed himself in July 1997 after a shooting standoff with police. The grandfather who was killed, Daryl Lussier, tried to negotiate a peaceful resolution, the newspaper said.

Residents at the home where Weise was believed to have lived with his grandmother declined to comment Tuesday. School was cancelled for the day as investigators scoured the building's six clues.

High school principal Chris Dennebaum said Weise "was not in what I would call a habitual troublemaker," and that he wasn't aware of a lot of teasing.

"I didn't really, I guess, feel that he was teased to the point where something like this would happen," he said.

At the Capitol in St. Paul, several hundred people attended a prayer ceremony for victims of the shooting where religious leaders joined leaders in drumming and chanting.

"There are about 500 people here now. ... but our people are strong," said Dan Kingbird, a Red Lake tribal member. "We'll come out of it."

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty expressed his condolences for the families of the victims and said it appeared the school had "very injurious intent."

"It looks like you had a very disturbed individual who was able to orchestrate a lot of preparations to do a lot of damage," the governor said.

But a school secretary said a retired police officer serving guard and that Brun had a weapon. Security guard who fired on Weise did not carry guns, Brun's cousin, Nancy Richards, said Brun also did not want a bulletproof vest.

It was the second Red school shooting in Minnesota in months. Two students were killed at Rocori High School in Cold Spring in September 2003. Student John Jo. son McLaughlin, who was 15 at the time, would trial in the case. AP

Parents beg US appeals court to save daughter

PINELLAS PARK, Fla.—The parents of brain-damaged Florida woman Terri Schiavo urged a 11th appeals court on Tuesday to reverse a lower court decision and order her feeding tube reinserted before their daughter died.

In a blow to the parents, and to the US Congress and the White House that stepped in to try to prolong Schiavo's life, US District Judge James Whittemore earlier on Tuesday rejected a request to order a resumption of feeding.

Bob and Mary Schindler immediately appealed to the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, saying their daughter's tube feeding was halted Friday under a state court order, was "feeling quickly" and her death was imminent.

Doctors have said Schiavo, 41, would likely remain alive for two or two weeks without the feeding tube.

There was no indication when the Atlanta court might rule in the latest dispute over Schiavo's fate, which has divided her husband, Michael, and her parents in a seven-year legal battle, and has become a cause for the Christian right, anti-abortion activists and even politicians.

A lawyer for Michael Schiavo, George Felos, said reporters he had been told by doctors that Schiavo would get 48 more hours without food before there would be complications with rearmaching her feeding tube.

That meant the Atlanta court should not feel pressure to reach a quick decision, Felos told reporters, adding whichever side lost the ruling would likely appeal to the US Supreme Court.

Asked about the parents' view that Schiavo was "fading fast," Felos said: "I do not believe it is true. Terri is stable, peaceful and calm."

Florida courts have found Schiavo to be in a "persistent vegetative state" and have long sided with Michael Schiavo, who is her legal guardian, in finding she would not wish to live in that condition and should be allowed to die.

Her parents, who say Schiavo responds to them and could recover, have persisted in trying to keep her alive.

"For the love of God, I'm begging you please don't let my daughter die of thirst," Mary Schindler said, weeping outside the hospice in Pinellas Park where Schiavo is being cared for.

The case landed in federal courts days after Schiavo's feeding tube was removed, thanks to a special bill giving federal courts jurisdiction that was rushed through by the Republican-led Congress. President George W. Bush cut short a Texas vacation to sign the law early on Monday.

In his down ruling, Whittemore said that legally he would have to rule the order to reinsert the feeding only if the Schindlers could show their lawsuit case, which tried to eliminate of rights such as due process, was likely to succeed in federal court. They had not, he said.

"This court concludes that Theresa Schiavo's life and Theresa Schiavo's life and Theresa Schiavo's life and

Today's view: What conflict of interest?

From page A1

puzzled why they are accusing him of conflict of interest," Fernandez told the hearing.

Fernandez said the bid worked with Loren or Today, and the Daily Globe, which preceded Today, and also vouched that Loren never always allowed the editorial group a free hand in the formulation of stories.

The taxpayer got in touch with Loren on Tuesday. Yesterday, he sent a text message saying that he was in the "Tokyo University for his son's graduation."

In a letter to Independent Senator of the Batasang Pambansa Corp., which publishes the Manila Standard, the newspaper editors, reporters and staff also took issue with Loren's being an opposition congressman.

Independent publisher

"How will directions from the publisher, an opposition congressman, jibe with our policy of supporting the administration?" the Manila Standard employees asked.

"Sir, what are they afraid of?" Theo Lorenzo will extract all their pro-administration stories?" columnist-senior Today staffers.

To fact, Rep. Loren is aligned with the "moderate coalition" led by Speaker Jose de Venecia that controls the House majority. Loren could not have been assigned to chair a House committee if he were an opposition congressman..."

They added that there's nothing wrong even if Loren is identified with the opposition.

"What's wrong with having a publisher independent of the House? Doesn't the Journalists Code of Ethics that they cite also speak of asserting one's independence from the powers that be?" Today's staffers said.

Complaint filed

On Monday, the MBSA filed a complaint before the Philippine Press Institute questioning the propriety of Loren's position as publisher of the Manila Standard Today even while he was an incumbent congressman representing the First District of Makati City.

MBSA president Tony Macapagal said Loren's dual position seem to violation of at least three provisions of the Philippine Journalist's Code of Ethics, a set of guidelines enforced and instituted by the PPI.

Violations of code of ethics

Macapagal said that being a publisher and a congressman, Loren violated provision No. 5 that said a journalist "shall not let personal motives or interests influence me in the performance of my duties; nor shall I accept or offer any payments, gift or other considerations of a nature which may cast doubt on my professional integrity."

He said Loren also violated provision No. 11 which states that journalists should conduct themselves "in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of my profession. When in doubt, decency should be my watchword."

According to Macapagal, Loren's dual position also violated provision No. 16, which states that journalists "shall accept only such tasks as are compatible with the integrity and dignity of my profession, including the 'contentious causes' when duties imposed on me conflict with the rules of my conscience."

'Grand design'

Aside from the violations of the Code of Ethics, the MBSA also complained that Loren had a "grand design" to turn the newspaper "into Today, the newspaper that failed."

"We have survived the past three years without a publisher. We do not know Congressman Loren's agenda," they also said in the letter to Rizalino dated March 21.

Early retirement option

The MBSA also assailed the "early retirement option" offered by management which would displace some MBSA members. They also said that the newsstands were already "overmanned" with the appointment of Fernandez as co-managing editor and two editors from Today.

"Our main interest is for us to survive, and we have proposed the past many years, we are willing to make sacrifices for it," the MBSA by Standard employees said. But the changes that Tonight had imposed since he became publisher on March 5 "do not seem to be leading the company to a better place," they said.

"In our view, our jobs are being threatened because our counterparts at Today have to turn their rank," the letter also said.

No new employees

MBSA vice president Atty. Villanueva said they would block any new appointment because it could be in violation of the union regulations that provides a moratorium on month probation for new employees.

But Manila Standard Today editor in chief Julie Sagalongos said there are "no new employees" yet appointed to any position in the newspaper.

"I have not signed any appointment papers," Yap Dacanay said.

Jesus' faces subsidize missionaries

From page A1

The missionaries invited hour their for our group called the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is here the Missionaries of Jesus. They practically had to seek shelter anywhere available.

Convinces said proceeds from the sale of "rosaries" as well as support of other benefactors helped the group acquire a lot in Antipolo City which is now the site of their headquarters, the Bahay Maysan.

The sculptures that adorn Bahay Maysan are actually the first ones Conferencias created since the Virgin of Sampaloc adorned a gallery.

The "rosaries" are now displayed at the Bahay Maysan, the headquarters of MJ, in Antipolo City. Literally fashioned out of rosaries, set discarded wood from the railroad tracks, the chiseled faces depict Christ the King, a Good Shepherd, and even a smiling Christ. But majority are of the suffering Christ—crowned with thorns, pierced, an an ignore and as an Indian, poor, sad and contemplative.

Conferias said he dreamed his works to the missionary group because he believes in what it is doing.

Not in terms of money

Conferias said that his donation could not be quantified in terms of money.

"Walang sukli. Ang bago yung binabayaran kasi sa artist, pagod, pero yung pagod ang akon nung nakakakita ka, nakamasdin mo [I don't feel] I am. Usually artists are paid for their labor. But if you know that what you're doing can do much help, you don't feel you've worked at all," he said.

It is the generosity and support that have kept the MJ going.

In addition to Conferias, the MJ is supported by bishops and private groups that include the University of Santo Thomas Choir, the St. Scholastica Group, La Salle alumni, Poco Cathedral, school alumni and individuals who formed themselves into the Friends of MJ, particularly the Quiaos, Ruiz Group.

Sense of achievement

He said donating his works to MJ also gave him a sense of having achieved something good.

"Nakakatuwa dun may nagpapasok ng isa bilang artist na may social aspect. Nagging instrument ka for a noble purpose. Di mahirap na happy ka kasi may ka artist ka nagsi nagpasok, I become an instrument for a noble purpose]," he said.

Artists generally have a reputation for being "selfish" and living a decadent life, he added. With the "training," he showed this was not true.

A SAMPLING: right during Holy Week in San Pablo, Laguna, is the Pasyonan procession depicting the passion of the Christ; with marines garbed women hanging rigid.

He said he is not a religious person, but doesn't know what led him to do religious works. He offered a touching and inspiring thought, though.

"Kasi yung nakikita ng mga tao yung mga religious images, magkakaroon sila ng isip sila ng mother's. Kapag wala nitchabot ang isang tao, hindi kailan siya nag-loop ng maayos. Ah ha [If people see religious images, then they will get a good thought. If a person is unable a church, he usually drinks alone good things, right?]" he said.

Concern for the poor

Conferias said he is also supporting the mission of MJ, which is to bring the Gospel to the good news, to the least communities.

Fr. Philfredo Dalay, coordinator general of the MJ, said Conferias has been very supportive of her group. "We share the same affinity and concern for the poor and the voiceless," he said.

Conferias, for his part, said he also helped the missionaries because he has known some of them for some time now.

Dalay recalled that Conferias was with them during the anti-martial law demonstrations.

Self-taught

A self-taught artist, Conferias said he makes sure his art retains a distinctly Filipino character.

"Ang mangkukuran sa ang tipo, mangkukuran na lang sa sa ating sila [If we are going to borrow ideas, let's just borrow from our own culture]," he said, adding that an artist should have an interior sense of the things he is doing.

His father, an artistic man himself, taught him to make art based on the materials at hand, and not to force the material to conform to what he wants to achieve.

A highlight of Conferias' career was the sale of the Rosaries, and how he made it out of it, he said.

He has seen various awards, including the Grand Prize in the 1992 Art Association of the Philippines Open Art Competition, and the 2003 Bonifacio Public Art Competition.

Conferias said he is pro-people, even to his art.

"I'm pro-worker. He pro-urban poor. He sympathizes to the ordinary people," he said.

Cardinal's passion: Visiting poor in village of Sin

From page A1

Fr. Rhoda Maeda, the village caretaker.

"His visits don't really last long, just for seven 15 and 30 minutes. But he spends most of the time with the children," Maeda said.

Not even his illness can keep the cardinal from his regular visits.

Days last December, after a scheduling stay in hospital, his stopped home only for a change of clothes and went straight to the Pasay community, recalled Maeda.

The visit came as a surprise to the villagers who learned the Sin had been diagnosed with low-grade fever that necessitated by being confined for a week at the Cardinal Santos Hospital.

Earlier in October 2004, he had spent 17 days in hospital after suffering from a heart attack while undergoing dialysis.

But apparently nothing can keep the man organic Sin down.

Maeda recalls the prelate suddenly showing up at the village on the afternoon of New Year's Day.

"I thought he was dropping in the villa because I know he was receiving a lot of guests. He's always very excited to come. He would always say, 'Something new? How many have been given because already?'"

No one could be more excited about having the multimillion-peso project completed soon.

'Father and son' duo

Sin and his protégé, now Bataan Bishop Tek Villegas, first envisioned the community to be the continuation of the prelate's ministry after his retirement, said Maeda.

The dynamic "father and son" duo raised the initial P6 million—through donations, supplemented by the sums that Sin received on retirement—for construction of the first building which is now occupied by 84 families.

Among the supporters of the project were the Couples for Christ group whose Gawad Kalinga program helped build the houses.

Sin and Villegas chose the plot themselves, which used to be the site of an old company compound and which is separated by the Pasig River from the Bonifacio shantytown.

'Richest' resident

Maeda says the plan was to build a relocation community for the poorest of the poor in Pasay. Probably the "richest" resident in the community is a retired driver who earns an estimated P2,000 a month.

The village design is something to marvel at. Located in the very middle, just a few steps from the entrance, is the Parish of the Mother of Perpetual Help. Its elaborate structure and basement are unusually similar to the Iglesia Ni Cristo where Villegas used to be the rector.

On both sides of the church are two rectangular buildings available for free for around 300 families.

Behind the church is a 14-classroom learning center where teachers will be provided by the nearby Montessori School.

At the far end of the community is the site of a planned low-cost housing project, also for Pasay residents. Lots are for sale to as low as P60,000.

3rd building

Maeda says workers are starting to complete the second building by May, the fourth and the school in time for Sin's 77th birthday on Aug. 23.

The low-cost housing project remains in the planning stage as Bishop Villegas, Maeda says.

In the meantime, Sin and his staff are busy screening residents who will be awarded spaces in the village. Everything is for free as recipients really have to be poor.

Much of the hard work on the buildings is done by the beneficiaries themselves, supervised by engineers, architects and a small group of construction people.

Each family is required to put in at least 240 hours a week, working on the house they would soon be occupying, says Maeda. They can help early-retired "bugs, do some painting or carpentry work.

No clothesline on display

The 12-sq. m. buildings are so cheap but still serious of high-end condominiums. "They're built in such a way that clotheslines, sometimes known in-quarter communities, are hidden in "laundry areas" in the middle of the buildings.

It's not to big enough to accommodate a living room at the front end, a small bedroom in the middle and a kitchen and toilet at the back.

Maeda says large families sacrifice bedrooms by building a second mezzanine within the children's privacy.

She's even shorter's step or simply build.

WHERE are the clotheslines? The spaces commonly seen in low-cost housing projects is hidden from view in designated laundry areas to keep the condo-style building sleek and neat. Fr. Mark Maeda, the village caretaker explains.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2011

Across the NATION

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News on Bohol mass poisoning ruins Quezon 'budin' trade

GABELITA Abuela shows freshly baked budin still in pans but without bayas.

TIONAL, Quezon—If there is one place in the country other than Makati, Bohol, that suffered from the mass poisoning of schoolchildren, it is the three quaint road popularly known in this town's, 150 km southeast of Manila as "Calle Budin."

"The local budin (cassava cake) industry is now down. There's almost no buyer after that news on Bohol poisoning, which was wrongly attributed to cassava, budin not in the media, "intoxicated hundreds of kids, one of the pioneers in the local budin trade in Barangay San Diego in the town center.

Budin (cassava cake), a rice Filipino dessert enjoyed year-round, is made from cassava locally called "balinghoy" or "kamoteng kahoy."

The grated cassava is mixed with cheese, evaporated milk, egg and sugar. The mixture is placed in a shallow round or square pan and baked to an even golden brown.

Abuela, who owns "Chabing's Special Budin" store, said they were forced to accept the return of the boxed cassava cakes from their regular sellers after news on "killer cassava" made headlines.

No buyers

"Although, it was not part of any agreement, we were forced to accept the returned products. We pity our sellers, there were really no buyers yet.

Cassava cake mall owners maintain their own group of regular makers who sell budin in a far as Manila.

"I've been in this business for almost three decades but this is the first time news from a faraway province had negatively affected our budin," she said. "What we were used to regularly receive as feedbacks on our products from here and abroad were all positive."

Abuela urged the national government to correct the impression that cassava is the culprit behind the mass poisoning in Bohol.

"The government should now categorically declare that the cause of the poisoning was pesticide or any other toxic chemical and not the cassava. There are lots of cassava-based industries that have been negatively affected by that careless conclusion," she said.

Another product

"Bilipark," mashed cassava with sugar and milk, and smoked or lucoy as Cafe Budin, was also a casualty in the negative news ago, Abuela said.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit has already declared in a written statement that pesticide poisoning was behind the deaths of 27 people in the San Jose Elementary School in Mabini on March 8.

Fifty children fell ill after eating caramelized cassava that they had bought from vendors outside the school during recess.

DOH officials revealed "significant findings of pesticide poisoning" among 49 victims tested by the authorities, but no cassava or cassava flour is currently produced by farmers, a popular root crop in the Philippines.

Florencio Bisay Jr, owner of Adreza Special Budin's store, noted that the 15 malls in the neighborhood regularly purchase an average of 1,000 pans of cassava cake daily.

"We've come down to less than a hundred a day but hopefully I'm sure nothing beats for the pure but dyes and I believe most Filipinos still celebrate. In person, making budin is a loving business because here," he complained. *Bella U. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Senator says gov't owes vets P24B

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A senator has called on the Philippine and United States governments to work for the compensation of Filipino war veterans, especially those who fought during World War II.

"Let us not forget those who died. But let us also not forget our veterans who are still alive," Sen. Richard Gordon said in a speech during rites commemorating the 66th anniversary of the liberation of the islands of Panay, Guimaras and Romblon from Japanese occupation.

Gordon said Filipino veterans in the US "have gotten their fair share" in terms of benefits and compensation but he said veterans in the Philippines "have gotten nothing so far."

He said the compromise could have been caused by too many claimants who have applied for compensation and benefits.

"But an effort must be made by both the Philippines and the US to find out the legitimate ones and then should not hide behind the fact that too many people are applying. They must find those who really died and served this country during that historical war," said Gordon.

P24B is debt

Gordon said the Philippine government owes all veterans, including those who fought in World War II, around P24 billion in compensation as mandated by law.

"It is not right to say we have no money. We must find that money to pay for the veterans," the senator said.

In an interview with reporters, the senator said the Philippines would have difficulty pushing for compensation from the US if it cannot pay the veterans.

Gordon's call was answered by around 600 veterans and their families who attended the commemoration at the Iloilo Provincial Capitol.

"We have long been hoping that our P5,000 monthly pension would be increased," said Rafael Sobremisana, 86, from Barangay Baybay San Miguel in Iloilo. He fought on the island of Guimaras and in Jaro Ulanzar here during the war.

Still alive

There are around 2,000 veterans still alive in Panay, Romblon and Guimaras, said Rodolfo Lamagtis, president of the 6th Military District World War II Veterans Association, Inc.

He said at least 18,000 joined the resistance movement against the Japanese occupation on these islands.

The ceremony was attended by defense attachés of the UK, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

China to invest $300M in Subic for glass factory

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—China's leading glass manufacturing company is pushing through with its plan to pour in $300 million worth of investments here, officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority said on Monday.

SBMA Administrator Armando Intoy said Wang Chengjin, president of Hebei Jinjunta, a large-scale glass company in China, has considered plans to put up his first glass factory at the Subic Economic Zone here.

Intoy said the company representative is revised some considerations set by the SBMA management and processing department, so here is really chosen a very suitable place to [illegible] Wang said during a recent meeting with Intoy and SBMA Chair Francisco Lavarias III.

Lavarias said the SBMA board is continued inviting other Chinese investors to come and continue investing in Subic.

"The country very interested in inviting you to Subic. You are assured that the SBMA will give you the support you need to fast-track the processing of your company's requirements," Lavarias told the visiting Chinese investors.

Officials of the company have committed to inform the investment, the biggest made by a Chinese firm in the country so far following President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to China last year.

They said they were determined to invest in Subic because of its strategic location for transshipment and effective security system.

The plant will reach at least 100 hectares of industrial flat land to accommodate the production plans for products such as rolling crystalline glass and coated online float glass, which are being supplied to more than 50 countries in Europe, Asia, the United States and Africa.

"We are producing high technology crystalline glasses that are seven to eight times more wear-resistant than alloy steel and 10 to 20 times corrosion-resistant than stainless steel. That is why they are very suitable to use as industry and building materials," Wang said.

The company's other products include float sheet glass and solar ecological reflective glasses.

Wang was accompanied here by top executives of the Jinjunta and George Judan, Philippine trade representative to Shanghai.

During the construction period, the project will hire more than 3,000 workers. Upon completion, the plant will employ 1,000 operation workers and 1,000 administrative employees, SBMA officials said. *Allen Macabenta, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Dumaguete food tour promotion questioned

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—"Food? Why would tourists come to Dumaguete because of food?"

For a city whose only claim to culinary fame is the "buffalo wings," Mayor Agnesio Remollo is telling Tourism Secretary Ace Durano's offer to put Dumaguete under the food tourism category with a grain of salt.

Should Negros be a food destination with all sumptuous delights that each chocolate-type struggles" in the metropolitan?

Durano made the announcement during his visit to Dumaguete last week with President Macapagal-Arroyo, two weeks after he was assailed by political and business leaders for failing to include Negros Oriental in the Department of Tourism's "Sipalay ani" promotions.

The DOT's television plugs under the food theme is being produced and will soon airing in June.

Awkward

Durano, however, said he finds it awkward to include Dumaguete and Negros Oriental in the food category. "I don't see how we can convince people outside that Dumaguete because of food. It's not of place."

He said it would be more appropriate to include Dumaguete and Negros Oriental in the "Arts, Culture" theme, the third batch of promotions being prepared by the DOT.

Durano said he hopes he could meet with Pasita Sarona Bea, tourism director for Central Visayas, to discuss the matter.

Gov. George Arnaiz, meanwhile, disclosed that the province would continue to sell itself through natural attractions.

He said the province's theme is to promote tourism that is environmentally friendly, wholesome and good for family visits.

Head of Acetylene Gang falls on drug possession charge

BACOLOD CITY—More than two weeks following his release after posting bail, a suspected leader of a robbery group was again arrested in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental, for possession of illegal drugs.

Peter Carmel, alleged head of the Acetylene Gang, is detained at the Cadiz City, Negros Occidental police station jail pending filing of criminal charges against him.

Carmel's arrest came more than two weeks after he was released on a P24,000 bail bail March 2 in connection with the robbery case in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

Carmel and his group, the Acetylene Gang, were suspected to be responsible for the robbery of at least 18 banks and pawnshops in Cebu, Bohol, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Dumaguete City, raking off with about P13 million in cash and jewelry.

The group was called Acetylene Gang because the members used acetylene to open the vaults of pawnshops and banks.

Last Sunday, the Cadiz City police conducted a raid on the house of Florfelita Jacalne, Carmel's live-in partner, in Barangay Mabigo, Cadiz, on the strength of a search warrant issued by the court.

Senior Insp. Devanadis Garcia, Cadiz police chief who led the raid, said they found 8.45 grams of suspected shabu in the house.

Jacalne said they are open to the search warrant for violation of an illegal loan before they raided the house of Jacalne where Carmel temporarily lived. *Carlos Villamor, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Woman driver lets out her woes

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Jane Miranda is by far the first and only woman in Pampanga who rises out a living by driving a jeepney to and out of the cities of San Fernando and Angeles.

Miranda also wants to talk to a fellow woman, President Macapagal-Arroyo, to tell her of the "kalbaryo ng mga mapee (the burdens of drivers)."

"We're not earning anymore," Miranda, 44, says, noting the rise in gasoline to the price of gasoline, parts and tires.

While the economic issues looming involving cops and traffic enforcers she says some are still stressed to bleed them dry of hard-earned money.

"If you don't drive and hit into the night, you would be able to bring home money," the widow says of how she is able to earn between P300 and P500 daily to send her two daughters and a son to college.

Pension

The P9,000 monthly pension of her late husband, Jessie Dilapo, comes handy when the money is short. Her husband, an Army sergeant, died in an encounter in 1991.

Miranda says she was forced to become a driver because life really is difficult.

As a driver for a Chinese family in Hong Kong starting in 1993, she worked to send her children and wanted to be always by their side to guide them as they grow up.

She held on until 1999 when there were enough savings to buy her own jeepney.

She has admitted her fellow jeepney with a canary, a picture of the Virgin Mary and a roaring car figurine for good luck.

Early bird

She's on the road as early as 4:30 a.m. daily, manning the day by picking up passengers without queuing at the terminal and later joining her group's pila (schedulized trips).

If the trip is good, she is home-bound by 6 p.m. Often, she stretches the 14-hour mark by an hour or two, managing to take down for three to five trips in between.

To her mind, those who pay boundary, the day's rent for the jeep, sari-sari and take home only between P150 and P200.

Only on the third or fourth trip do they get to raise the amount.

"The first trip is (for raising the money for) gasoline. The second is for the jeep's owner," Miranda says.

She says being a woman driver makes her vulnerable to discrimination.

"Because I'm a woman, there are passengers who fear riding in my jeep," she says.

She says the safety of her passengers is always in her mind, noting that she has not figured in any accident. She often keeps a firm call to other jeep

CLEANING GOV
Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi goes to work leading the cleanup of the water near the Cavitex Bay Resort, a campaign he vowed to conduct on a regular basis and to help rid Cavite's waters of debris and garbage.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jose Bartolome
Bureau Chief Florentino G. Solmerano

Laguna's old churches await pilgrims

By Romy Poceo
Sta. Cruz, Laguna

PILGRIMS, even those coming from other countries, may consider visiting 12 churches in Laguna, most of which are centuries-old, extraordinary and popular as centers of devotion by Catholics and Christians during this Lenten season:

San Pedro

One of the most popular, the Church of the Santo Sepulcro, located in the ancestral village of Landayan in San Pedro town, draws the biggest number of visitors. Fridays are opened days, the days of devotion to the Santo Entierro or the "Mahal na Poong" patron saint of the Parish of the Holy Sepulcher, which was founded in September 1945.

Thousands of devotees line up the street, waiting for their turn to touch the image at the corner of the altar. On Good Fridays, the single line extend up to 6 km long, even bring up to the Pantok Complex or the Memorial of the South Luzon Expressway.

The church can be reached via the expressway or Susana Heights.

Paid

The Church of San Pedro de Alcantara or Mid-wayers famous for its religious history called the Turumba festival, which starts March 19 and lasts three months.

Devotees living with them their memorial and pictorial before the miraculous Virgin of Turumba known as the "Our Lady of Sorrow."

Many of those coming from Distrito province attend the Misas in honor of the Blessed Virgin or the solemn, emotion-filled procession. It is nearby spring that is believed to heal the sufferer.

Stories of miraculous healing and graces received are common in this most revered and longest of all festivals.

The church can be reached through the expressway, passing through Calamba City, Los Baños, Sta. Cruz and Pagsanjan, or the Antipolo (Rizal) route through Mabitac, Siniloan and Pangil.

It took the people of Paid 95 years to finish the stone church, according to church documents. The church was completed in 1767 and earned the reputation of being the smallest among the Laguna kits.

Pangil

The 407-year-old Nuestra Señora de la Natividad (Our Lady's Nativity) parish in Pangil town, which is also home to the miraculous images of the Nuestra Señora de la O and Sto. Niño de la O, was first built by early missionaries in Tayabas (Quezon) in 1596. This church, made from limestone materials was unfortunately destroyed by earthquakes and storms.

In 1613, a stone church and a convent were built. At that time, the church was the biggest in Laguna. It is famous for its miraculous image of the pregnant Madonna called the Our Lady of the O, which was donated by Spain's Prince Carlos who later became King Carlos.

Some devotees testified that it was through the intercession of the pregnant Madonna that a dengue epidemic that struck hardest in Pangil was stopped in 1998.

A six-month old Pangil in 1974 was also said to have subsided after the residents prayed to the Damian Señora de la O for nine days and performed a penitential procession of the pregnant Madonna around the enclosure grounds.

Sta. Rosa

The Church of Santa Rosa de Lima, located in the City of Sta. Rosa, was founded on Jan. 10, 1792, coinciding with the naming of Sta. Rosa's political independence.

Construction began only in 1796, four years after the founding of the parish, and took 16 years to finish. It was administered by the Dominicans, the first missionaries to organize and serve the parish. Old documents say labor was provided by residents, as well as recruits from Cainta who decided to live in Santa Rosa.

The image of the patron saint, St. Rose of Lima, is enthroned at the center of the ceiling-high retable of the Church of Santa Rosa de Lima.

On Aug. 22, 1999, another image coming all the way from Santa Rosa's origin in Lima was offered as a gift from the Peruvian capital and then Peruvian Ambassador to the Philippines Victor Artemio Illanes. It is enthroned on a new retable in the north transept side of the church.

Calamba

The Church of San Juan Bautista in Calamba City was founded in 1611, but nobody can really say when it was built. What is known is that part of the existing adobe wall dates back to the original construction that was burned by Japanese forces on July 12, 1945.

On that day, town residents were herded into the church by the flaming Japanese and burned. The incident has been called the Calamba Massacre.

The fire did not level the church. The parish priest, Eliseo Hemedarquez, fled and returned at the end of World War II to rebuild the church.

It was in this church where national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal, was baptized on June 20, 1861.

Los Baños

The Church of the Immaculate Conception in Los Baños town, which is 392 years old, belongs to one of the oldest Spanish communities in the Philippines.

In 1590, Franciscan priest Fray Pedro Bautista from a convented mestiza saint of the Catholic Church) discovered numerous springs of hot mineral water containing sulfur in a place which natives called Pilahan. Twenty years later, the Franciscans established a temporary convent for their religious who were administering the springs and popularized the waters for curative purposes.

It was only in 1611 when the parish of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception was established. After two years, the town center was formed and renamed Los Baños.

Pila

The Church of San Antonio de Padua of Pila was recently announced by former Bishop Francisco C. San Diego as a Shrine of San Antonio de Padua in honor of the patron saint's miraculous interventions, among other reasons.

Town before the naming of the Spaniards, Pila was already noted for its spiritual endeavors. The town center was known as Pagalangan (place of sorcerers).

In Luslana (O. Santiago, in his account about the Pila church, said that when the conquistadores discovered Pila in 1571, they were so impressed by the wisdom of its people that they confirmed it the special title La Noble Villa de Pila.

Among the miracles attributed to the patron saint are cure for cancer, pregnancy and finding lost belongings.

Pagsanjan

The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Pagsanjan, one of the most beautiful in Laguna, is 416 years old. It was initially a crude structure of nipa and bamboo built in 1688 by the townsfolk.

Fray Agustin, the first parish priest of Pagsanjan when it became a regular parish on Nov. 12, 1687, donated the image of its patron saint, Our Lady of Guadalupe. The image was given to him as a gift by rich and pious Mexican families. It was installed on the main altar of the church, which was completed in time for the town's first celebration of the Feast of the Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, 1688.

Some accounts say Fray Agustin had suggested that a bigger church be built. The new church was completed in 1689.

Franciscan friars Felix de Huerta mentions in his account that a Chinese, Miguel Gaan-Co, and the chief aguacil alferez, Alonso Garcia, directed the rebuilding of the church. The same structure underwent more improvements, but it was heavily damaged during World War II.

Attempts to restore the church were made, but serious efforts took place only in 1960, under Archbishop Alejandro Olalia.

On April 5, 1969, Bishop Pedro R. Bantigue blessed the rebuilt church and consecrated the main altar.

Mabitac

The parish name of Mabitac has a 98-step stone stairway that leads to the Church of Nuestra Señora de Candelaria. From this height, one can enjoy a panoramic view of the Laguna de Bay.

The church is named with an image of the Nuestra Señora de Candelaria, believed 1189 and 1600, one such image was commissioned by the ajlwan Ilemar Cristobal de Mercado, for the church in Oilao outside Intramuros (now Plaza Mendiz), according to Fr. Sella de Huerta.

Three years later, the image was transferred to a newly founded hospital in Los Baños where it stayed for several years.

In 1615, Franciscan provincial Fray Juan Miguel de Talavera from the parish of Binabuan requested the Father Provincial to "surrender" the image in the hospital of Los Baños to Binabuan. Fray Talavera maintained it to be placed on a little manor between Imagsanan and Galoy, two barrios of Binabuan, "for the purpose of assisting the several rancherias scattered about and around the place, so as to facilitate their spiritual administration."

The place where the Ermita was constructed was eventually separated from the mother town of Binabuan by popular demand. This gave rise to the founding of Mabitac as a town in 1618, named after the many holes and cracks in the land during the dry season.

Majayjay

The seal of Catholicism in Laguna was planted in the town of Majayjay where the first cross was erected in 1580, near the river called Mayi-it. This town was honored in a small shed of nipa and bamboo, which the natives themselves built, said Dr. Huerta.

The first church was burned in 1576. Two years later, the San Gregorio Magno Church was built, again of bamboo and nipa and dedicated to the patron saint, St. Gregory the Great.

In 1590, the central government authorized the construction of a stone church in Majayjay in 1610, an edifice made of stone was begun and this was completed in 1649.

In 1660, it was again razed and underwent several rehabilitation efforts. The task was herculean, considering that the church was over 60.5 meters wide and 16.6 m high for a parish population of only 4,000.

Amid protests, the church was finally finished in 1730 by 4,000 people on forced labor. Rehabilitation cost P36,000.

A century later, the church was again destroyed by a typhoon. It was reconstructed through the help of the parishioners.

Because of its age, the church was placed under the government's rehabilitation program in 1994 with the help of the National Conservation Society of the Philippines.

Nagcarlan

Catholicism was brought by the Franciscan missionaries from Majayjay to Nagcarlan in 1575.

In 1583, the first church in the town was built out of wood and nipa, through the support of Fray Tomas de Miranda, who was credited for being the first to plant tobacco in the Philippines. The Church of San Bartolome Apostol was built in honor of the town's patron, Bartholomew the Apostle.

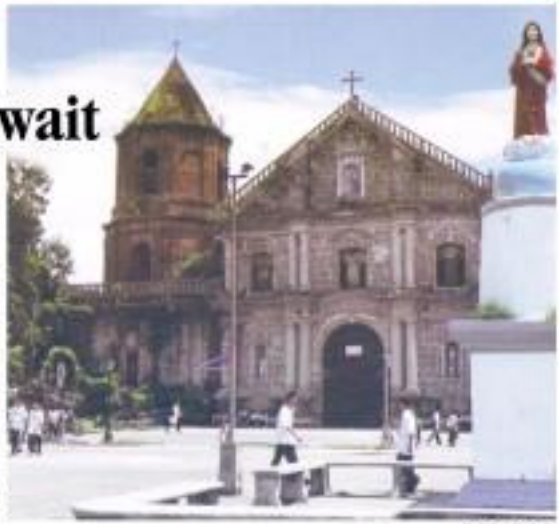
In 1752, a stone church was built but was damaged by fire in 1781. Repair work was started by Fray Ayuzo de Angulo and completed by Fray Bernardo de la Pueblo, who added a beautiful four-story tower.

In 1880, more renovations were made. A stone platform and underground cemetery were also built.

San Pablo

The Augustinian Missionaries founded the church of San Pablo in 1600. When the Augustinians left in 1756, the Franciscan friars took over and ran the parish until 1898. The parish was later placed under the care of the diocesan priests.

The church was originally under the Archdiocese of Cagsa. When the diocese of San Pablo was founded on April 18, 1967, it was made the Cathedral of the Diocese.



THE ST. ANTHONY of the Padua Shrine in Pila town. Among the miracles attributed to the patron saint are cure for chronic pregnancy and finding lost belongings.

THE SAN SEPULCHRO in Landayan in San Pedro town draws the biggest number of visitors.

THE SANTA Rosa de Lima Church in Sta. Rosa town. The image of the patron saint, St. Rose of Lima, is enthroned at the center of the ceiling-high "retable."

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OPINION

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Broken bread

EASTER may have the climax, but Maundy Thursday has the oldest practices peculiar to Holy Week. Of course, many Catholics associate Holy Thursday with the Mass since the day commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist. And since the Mass is basically a celebration, it is not surprising that many of the practices revolving around Maundy Thursday are joyous, a

EDITORIALS

lull to the pathos of Good Friday and the grief of Black Saturday.

Since the day has a practical character—the preparation for the Lord's sacrifice on the cross—Holy Thursday has evolved into a day of different necessary ceremonies. In ancient Rome, for example, while the preparation for candidates for baptism was being finalized, the Church also celebrated misa chrismalis, the ritual for the preparation of the holy oils that would be used for the baptisms and other important liturgical rituals. Along with the baptism of neophytes, penitents took part in reconciliation ceremonies.

That Maundy Thursday is associated with rituals of preparation is evident in the washing of the feet. Biblically, the washing was a prelude to the Last Supper, and was a form of libation or cleansing. Theologically, too, it became a ritual of self-debasement or humility since Christ made the gesture of washing the feet of his apostles in order to deliver his message more powerfully for the apostles to be servants of the people: Service, to Christ, means nothing short of self-sacrifice. He himself set the powerful example when he died on the cross.

The Last Supper, of course, prefigured that sacrifice. As the central event that instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, it took its chief symbolism from the breaking of the bread, which was both a metaphor for fellowship and for sacrifice. That Christ instructed his apostles to do the supper in his memory indicates that sharing and sacrifice are two sides of the same coin.

All of those injunctions and encouragement should indicate that Maundy Thursday is the day in which Christians prepare themselves in order to be able to fulfill Christ's mandate (Maundy comes from the Latin mandatum, which means mandate). The Christian imperative is to love one another and share in the fellowship of service and sacrifice.

A spoonful of sugar

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

SAY a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down," John Anderson sang in "Mary Poppins," the 1964 Oscar-award winning movie, which was later remade as Broadway's musical.

A 2003 version of that runs haunts the country's sugar industry leaders, here to blame it on the Food Fortification Law's directive to fuse sugar with essential nutrients, even as malnourished youngsters died wretchedly families within the "sugar belt."

Long before RA 8976 came on the books, scientific data mounted on how widespread "hidden hunger" devastated the most vulnerable groups: children and pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.

The Sixth National Nutrition Survey released last July confirmed what previous studies revealed: 4 out of every 10 pre-schoolers, three inch Vitamin A, making them vulnerable to blindness and outgoing every minutes to diseases. Stunted wide-stippled IQs, many go to premature graves.

Two out of every 10 pregnant and lactating women lack this most basic micronutrient. Severely anemic mothers are more likely to deliver babies who, in turn, will give birth to the next generation of dwarfed babies.

Here, "the rate of 172 maternal deaths per 100,000 is unacceptably high," says the United Nations study titled "A Common Vision, A Common Journey." The comparative toll in Thailand is 36, it is 30 in Malaysia.

Experience shows that boosting micronutrients in staples—from salt, flour, oil to soy sauce and sugar—is the most cost-effective way of bringing these deficiencies down.

The United States was "the first country that successfully used salt iodization in the 1920s," shows fill percent of instant noodles in Thailand today are fortified with iron, iodine and Vitamin A. Chile fortifies its soy sauce. Guatemala was combined that the rice industry (FAM) with a Vitamin A-rich. It also packs four to five times more iron than other cereals. But its commercial use may be three years away.

Fortifying salt here halted iodine deficiency disorders. The nutrients of Tabal "Due to the anemia, the aesthetics of Dayaina—and Pearson has more distinct."

Sanitary Ayala nor nutrients died. The MRT remembered John the was the OFF this' left. Without the MRT, folks would be dead from and it is Obviously working as it is, five years of on the MRT opened, with a flood of new cars vanishing over it. It's what I take every time up to Makati.

It had the virtue of having a strong air conditioner (which, during you are interested during blistering summers, though it threatened to give you pneumonia when you fell in the path of its breezes while drenched in sweat. But that was before it was over-run by the huge crowd that now patronizes it. Dashing from home to the terminal hours of years where you understand how restless felt. Pity the workers.

They saved the best for last, or at least the most recent. It's the LRT 2 which runs the length from Recto in Manila to Cubao to Santolan before Antipolo. The idea, I gather, is for the line LRT and the MRT to form a circle—which would be completed when the PNR the Bicutan and is extended to Carmona—and for the second LRT to run across the circle, so that you can move easily from most parts of Metro Manila by shifting trains.

I did that last week. I wanted to go to Gilmore to buy some computer small, and took the MRT to Cubao from Pasong and there the LRT 2 to Gilmore. Pagasa to Cubao is the first massive swap and Cubao to Gilmore runs. Some things I discovered in the course of it:

One is that it is a fairly long walk from the MRT station in Cubao to the LRT 2, as train by

Ironically, it is here where nutritional shortfalls are most severe, in Negros Occidental for example, almost half the kids from six months to five years of age, both Vitamin A. Four out of 10 are anemic and underweight. Anemia is most prevalent in kids 157 percent). Attack kilowa directly.

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Here's just one searing incident: The month's Building last out the recipes of her two daughters, Margarita and Rochelle, who died in a single wooden box. "When I came money, I realized they were not really wearing dresses. It was sugar paper..."

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Broken people

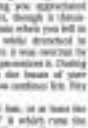
IN THE PHILIPPINES, the joyous preparatory character of Maundy Thursday is quite evident in the visita iglesia, in which penitents become pilgrims going the rounds of churches to perform in quite a literal fashion the passion of the Christ, as summed up in the 14 Stations of the Cross. The latter devotion has been updated by the addition of a 15th station, the Resurrection, obviously as a corrective to what some critical churchmen and modern Catholics perceive to be the martyrdom complex of the Filipinos, their penchant for pathos and self-disparagement.

The addition is quite satisfactory because the liturgy is performative, and it would be pointless to perform the resurrection while going through the motions of sacrifice and death, which are the foci of the Stations of the Cross. And in the colorful calendar of the Roman Catholic Church, there is an appointed time for everything, lionizing the resurrection on a day traditionally reserved for the performance of rituals to prefigure the sacrifice is poor programming. It makes Easter redundant.

Moreover, the attitude that looks at the Filipino Catholics' rituals of sacrifice and martyrdom as nothing but delusive and futile is arrogantly secular and liberal, sensibilities that are basically anti-religion. Those sensibilities have given rise to the mercenary and saccharine attitude of evangelicals and charismatics. Culturally, this is manifested in the media's and other sectors' determination to trumpet "world-class" Filipinos and their international victories. Tired of defeats and sorry stories, this nation wagers on the quixote to give it a nice feeling. Now that Pacquiao has lost . . .

But there's no denying Filipinos are a broken people. They are the others. Brokenness comes not only from the struggles and pains of existence, but also from the divisions and backbiting that obtain during the struggles. A people's solidarity and sufferings should indicate that they would come off the challenge whole and more consummate. They go through the rituals of brokenness to be reconstituted as a people. And that's the promise—and mandate—of Easter.

Thank God for the trains



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THOUGHT something you say on this holy week, and that is to explore fifteen months by public transport. I've made a number of discoveries that way lately. I don't take the car to the airport anymore if I can help it or anybody else in Makati, coming as I do from Quezon City. I take the train. In case you still don't know it, we now have three lines running across the city.

There's the LRT line from Gilmore in the east of Taft, which dates back to the early 80s, pretty much the only thing Imelda can be proud of. I recall it was widely ridiculed as another insoluble project then, not least by the ex-subservient in Antonio Rival that is eventually ran on the ground. The shadow does fall on it from the overhead tracks, making it somewhat claustrophobic, I was told. The once lush estate, one of the favorite places of my youth—that was where the bookstores and movie houses and shops were; there was an arcade on the ground floor on top of the main street lovers; CBS, a favorite dating place of lovers...sadly razed forlorn and seedy.

Up until recently, when the spot at least in front of National Bookstore reclaimed part of its responsibility, the whole avenue had become home to the 70s. I recall a TV show that featured the place many years ago, and I was astonished at its plunge into profusion. The LRT line runs partly through this. It has turned out to be a humongous blessing. Without it, Ayala Avenue would be dead by now. I worked near the place in the mid 1970s and can tell you horror stories about the traffic there. Even at least a couple of occasions, I walked the length of Ortigas to Quezon at night. It was insane.

The MRT line opened shortly before the last power of Ferdy's dictatorial years, putting ahead of schedule to proclaim the dawning of the new millennium. I remember that it was loudly opposed too by the real estate owners in Ayala and elsewhere, who feared they'd suffer the same fate as their counterparts in Avenida. I especially recall one of them defined, on 6 months, a columnist in one newspaper, arguing compulsorily unwisely that the train line running the length of Edsa would spoil its aesthetics. The aesthetics of Edsa? That is like arguing the aesthetics of Smokey—and Pearson has more distinct.

Sanitary Ayala nor nutrients died. The MRT remembered John the was the OFF this' left. Without the MRT, folks would be dead from and it is Obviously working as it is, five years of on the MRT opened, with a flood of new cars vanishing over it. It's what I take every time up to Makati.

It had the virtue of having a strong air conditioner (which, during you are interested during blistering summers, though it threatened to give you pneumonia when you fell in the path of its breezes while drenched in sweat. But that was before it was over-run by the huge crowd that now patronizes it. Dashing from home to the terminal hours of years where you understand how restless felt. Pity the workers.

They saved the best for last, or at least the most recent. It's the LRT 2 which runs the length from Recto in Manila to Cubao to Santolan before Antipolo. The idea, I gather, is for the line LRT and the MRT to form a circle—which would be completed when the PNR the Bicutan and is extended to Carmona—and for the second LRT to run across the circle, so that you can move easily from most parts of Metro Manila by shifting trains.

I did that last week. I wanted to go to Gilmore to buy some computer small, and took the MRT to Cubao from Pasong and there the LRT 2 to Gilmore. Pagasa to Cubao is the first massive swap and Cubao to Gilmore runs. Some things I discovered in the course of it:

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Ironically, it is here where nutritional shortfalls are most severe, in Negros Occidental for example, almost half the kids from six months to five years of age, both Vitamin A. Four out of 10 are anemic and underweight. Anemia is most prevalent in kids 157 percent). Attack kilowa directly.

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Lenten insights

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassman

IN THE SPIRIT of the season, let's get away from heavy, mundane issues and concentrate on the spirit, courtesy of Fr. Carlos H. Abesamis, S.J., professor of biblical studies at the Loyola School of Theology and resource person for the Jesus-Christ Encounter. The author of a number of books, among them "A Third Look at Jesus," Fr. Abesamis established last December what he calls the "Backpack-to-Jesus-Seeker," planned as a series of 10 lectures on Sundays at Ateneo.

"Backpack" is a mode of imaginary communication among three characters: God (perhaps the author), "Seeker" and "Backpack" (a talking repository of spiritual baggage). The "Bible Pages" also comes into cool play. All of them intervene in varying proportions of humor and seriousness. This appealing write people perhaps much more than straight sermons. "Backpack" runs by akin to narration in graphic novels. Fr. Abesamis has written a number of books in this genre, the latest of which is "Mel Gibson & Filipino Catholicism: Soul-Mates? (Mel Gibson's Incomplete Jesus)." I regret to have only some talking.

Here's a sample:

God, Seeker, Backpack: The next item in our backpack is Mel Gibson and his film, "The Passion of the Christ."

Backpack: Backpack-bye and bishops have divided to see it. How did it affect you?

God: Attention—my personal and unconditional love. Jesus did suffer and die for you! He did it sooner for you than for me. I'm glad and doubly that you believe in my eyes for me to be pain and beyond.

Backpack: So, it was a spiritual experience.

God: It was, and I'm grateful for the remainder. Paul's "...who loved me and gave himself up for me" can become your personal experience. Thanks to Gibson for making me here.

Seeker: I had a similar experience, but...

God: I no have a "but."

[] Fun Question

Backpack: So, was it not a totally positive experience?

God: It was, but

Indeed, a strategic force against poverty

LETTERS

THE PHIL 32 editorial—on the British bank executive invited to share advice on solving the homeless problem for the victims of the Ethiopian—elicited a lot of admiration from and relating experience. In fact, our Cabinet secretary sent us a text message, advising that he cried after reading it.

The story of Warner shivering during "returning that scene from the hotel" to just one of the many stories happening in Tacloban. In fact, the editorial's exhortation in the business community was very timely. There are now 66 major corporations that have partnered with our group and reach with their own "sharing" story to tell.

But it shouldn't stop there. Others should follow the lead of the Concepcions, the Ayalas of Pantawid, the Mercados of Bel Marra and Manny and Pacquiao (who introduced us, by the way, to Manning), the Lorenzos of Lapanday, the Dings of McDonald's, the Lopezes of MER-CURE and many other caring leaders who are now in taking up this advocacy of addressing poverty and protecting the well-being of our less privileged kababayans (not a higher level of subtlety).

But what I cautioned a wide audience was the business sector. It is incumbent upon us actually a strategic force in fighting poverty and deployment in this post concept.

More power to his blooming Bantuhay ang Pilipinas!

—BOBBY JOSON,
executive director,
Gawad Kalinga,
jones_diane2@yahoo.com

ENVIRONMENTAL groups refuse to rest the mining issue

Put up or shut up

THE is in connection with the news story "Virose asked to probe Barangay 'kamagara,'" PDN, 3/11/05) which linked our client, Armando L. Sanchez, governor of Barangay.

It is unfortunate that some Barangaylon, instead of helping the present administration in its great and speed up the delivery of public services, and modernize the province through a dynamic, proactive and grab-for-growth vision, have chosen instead to propagate more con-canards, long peddled by disgraced politicians, to confuse, misinform and hard-working public servant.

The same lies were circulated in my last electorate, and the people of Barangay rejected the obvious fabrications by voting Sanchez in. As the governor's office is now overflowing with the superior resources and the national mayor of his rivals for the post, how the sitting vice governor fell under the same news story "Virose asked to probe Barangay 'kamagara,'" PDN, 3/11/05) which linked our client, Armando L. Sanchez, governor of Barangay.

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Curious stand

RICENTE, Rep. Edcel Lagman purported that female Filipino entertainers working in Japan by no longer referred to as "*japayuki*." He agree. He believe that they do not deserve that decision. We are with them in their dance for the humiliation of the name. Japayuki is a term used to describe Filipino immigrants and visa rules on their entry into and work in Japan.

The whole government apparently supports the crackdown. The Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo are all trying to help our kababayan exit their dancing business in their respective. The effort, for instance, of Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo in personally following up the case in Tokyo is very laudable. Even the President herself has made her opinion.

However, the CBN has a very curious position insofar as the so-called Filipina "comfort women" are concerned.

It is on record that the present Filipino ambassador to Tokyo, Rodrigo Franco, in his first term as Philippine envoy to that capital, disregarded and enervated the call for justice of the Philippine Panel organized for independence of the Filipina comfort women, to commend the policy of the Japanese government denying payment of such claims.

Worse, Franco endeavored to win Jose Ayllones of the 108-Kilogram Madness Affairs, discussing ing out lawmakers to propose a legislation that would somehow compensate these comfort women (they are activists), and pending final resolution of their claims by the Tokyo government.

Ayllones echoed the line of the Japanese media that the issue is already settled the matter of compensation under the Reparations Agreement. He added that the proposed legislation might "impair" Japan-Philippines bilateral ties and even the PEA-Amari project.

The arguments of these politicians is curious, to say the least. If they are not clear enough the compensation is already settled, why should they fear the passage of a law to implement? The law on nonappearing Japan does not hold water. Japan would not offer any aid or assistance if it would not serve their interest in doing so. Besides, any aid would be contingent. Funding for the Philippines. And are would hardly count up with the funds, as our country is in perpetual fiscal crisis.

Ayllanes might have served in our embassy in Tokyo. Hence, married to a Japanese, is serving his second term as ambassador. And he was a student in Tokyo. Franco could be of immense help here, and did it receive the Commission on Appointments?

Shame's stand was certainly a curious one. No wonder, the issuance of Romulo to Tokyo failed.

—ALEJANDRO LAÑADA,
ambassador (ret.),
alaslan@lycos.com

Politicians to blame for people's ignorance, poverty

I LOVE reading the letters, especially the column of Leandro Quinto. I do not miss reading the editorial, too. In its Feb. 25 issue, the editorial, titled "Dubious" stated:

"Democracy itself cannot survive that only the best, the brightest, the most upright and most moral would be elected to its ranks. It is the people who elect their representatives who have to be more educated and better informed so that they can choose the best and the most upright men and women who will legislate for them."

Really, this makes sense in a way, it failed to consider some important things. I would like to ask, to address the problem in most politicians who run for public office or the right reasons or perhaps best for the job. I do not think the problem is with the voters or rural people, who the most numerous, are regarded as illiterate or uneducated for not sense of poverty. Poverty due to the politicians, who are with the neglect or apathy of most politicians.

My point is, the poor people who for basic needs are deprived of access to better education or better information are not to be blamed. They are only victims. The real "criminals" who should answer for the ignorant that has gone rampant are the politicians who have no time for providing the most selfish and evil of reasons, totally ignorant of or detached to the meaning of "service."

—EUGENIO MIGUEL,
shalynet15@yahoo.com

Surprised at being No. 2

I WAS very surprised when I saw the headline "RP No. 2 on Asia graft list" (PDN, 3/9/05) but glad that the Philippines should have ranked first in the list of the most corrupt country—but only to Asia but worldwide. Graft and corruption stalks in poor among the poorest in the world, while our politicians live the opposite way of life.

The government's rank and file contributors much to these woes. One of these days, I want to see entire state auditor's go to jail for approving all the illegal disbursements made illegal transactions up your legs. They are supposed to be the ordinary Filipino's last line of defense against corruption; the watchdog of the people's hard-earned money. That's why it is an outrageous that these projects are left unaudited due to lack of funds.

The genuine citizens of all time are servitudes and regional directors who steal budgets in their fiefdom. That is being their beliefs and games under the auspices of acting like rulers in the stamp. I have nothing personal with their governors though an office that is supposed to be the servant of the people, not the master.

It is unfair to note that many of these savings people get their academic degrees from a state university funded with people's money.

—JOY MONTEROLA,
joy_montenola@yahoo.com

Threats of large-scale mining

THE COALITION For Mother Earth expresses its call for the abolition of the Philippine Mining Act (Republic Act 7942), which allows 100 percent foreign equity/control for mining projects and a 25-year duration for mining contracts, renewable for another 25 years.

The law paves the way to the exploitation of our marine resources, mineral resources, watersheds, mountainous forests and mineral resources. The law opens approximately 7 million hectares of lands in Mindanao to large-scale mining.

The coalition avowedly condemns the "promo-centered" dedicated to the mining cause.

According to Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center-Friends of the Earth/Philippines (LRC) Bernas, mounting mining operations have destroyed lands and resources in Mindanao, as manifested by landslides, soil erosion and pollution of underground and surface water, not to mention the mercury poisoning of schoolchildren in Apokon, Tagum, Davao del Norte.

Specifically, mining operations in Compostela, which have been going on for 15 long years, have ignited social conflicts even as they have created exploitation, led to mineral disintegration and made a significant adverse impact on people's health. Large-scale mining is more destructive and land because, in processing gold, it uses cyanide which is most dangerous chemicals.

International funding agencies increasingly condemned a study showing that large investments in mining have a negative impact on development.

—NICHOLAS CARMEN,
ZTV-4 Pamalaran St.,
Malandag, Intramuros City

Accountability to coconut farmers

WE support Sen. Joker Arroyo's call for the termination of the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Miguel Cuisy, chairman for leveraging the interest of the small coconut farmers.

So was aptly pointed out by the good senator, the main function of these government corporations is to provide for the welfare of the coconut farmers and enhance the government's interests. They were supposed to devise government shares in the food and beverage company. Apparently, these Malacañang-appointed corporations have become consistent instruments accountable to their principals in government or to the small coconut farmers and farmworkers.

Perhaps, these Malacañang-appointed directors need to be constantly reminded that government's control and make in the company emanate from the shares that were acquired using the coconut levy funds. These include the 27 percent of SMC shares, as decided by the Sandiganbayan, plus the 20 percent being contested by the small farmers.

By agreeing to the issuance of additional shares, these shareholding-appointed directors have effectively diluted government's control of the firm. This is similar to the entry of Kirin Brewery in SMC. The agreement with the Japanese brewery effectively diluted the control of government over the company and reduced it to 25 percent. These directors have practically put the small farmers' interest at risk.

What the coconut farmers need are representatives who will promote and protect their interests and exercise a high degree of accountability. It is very clear that based on the decision of the Sandiganbayan, the shares in the SMC are "owned by the government and the small coconut farmers."

—ERIC ARGUELLES,
executive director,
Philippine Peasant Institute,
loc. 1219 PHC bldg.,
Commonwealth Ave.,
Diliman, Quezon City

Darkening shadows over EU summit

BRUSSELS, Belgium—Growing fears of a French "no" vote on the European Union constitution and concerns about resuming arms sales to China overshadowed a European Union summit aimed at boosting jobs and growth.

The 25 EU leaders started their two-day meeting by approving changes in the so-called Stability and Growth Pact, which will give euro-using nations more leeway to spend their way out of an economic downturn.

"It is a pact which is more intelligent, more accepted and more respected," said French President Jacques Chirac. EU finance ministers clinched the deal on the euro rules to form on Sunday.

During dinner talks, the leaders were expected to discuss plans to streamline economic reforms with the end view of cutting red tape and boosting investment and employment, thereby increasing the bloc's competitiveness. They were expected to endorse the new plans at the end of their summit.

Separately, EU finance ministers were to discuss the nomination of EU deputy defense chief Nick Witney as president of the World Bank. Bush said Germany have already backed his candidacy.

Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, the summit chair, was optimistic the economic reforms would get Europe's economy back on track.

He said the success of previous reforms can only spur pursuit. "I think there is a need to renew ... to reform on jobs and growth," he said after pre-summit talks with union and business leaders.

Private, however, warned that EU leaders should not put efforts to cut red tape and promote reforms ahead of workers' rights.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Constant Brand

"We believe that it's a mistake to suggest that somehow social policy needs to be bolstered a bit and competitiveness needs to be put up the priority list," said John Weekly, general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation.

Diplomats said the EU's 15-year old arms embargo against China could become an issue at the economic summit talks.

Concerns were raised last week after China passed a new law threatening to use military force against Taiwan if the island declares independence. But foreign Secretary Jack Straw said China's threats have complicated the EU's position, and diplomats hint the arms process could be delayed.

Germany and France have pushed hard for the EU to lift the embargo as a political signal of EU's recognition of Beijing's growing economic and political importance.

The United States has been arms sales to China. Both embargoes were imposed following Beijing's bloody 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

Diplomats in Brussels, including EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, acknowledged that Beijing's threats have added complexity.

UN Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice added pressure before the summit, telling EU nations they "should do nothing" that could alter the military balance of power in Asia through the sale of sophisticated weapons.

Another issue—the ratification of the EU's new constitution, which faces a key test in France's May 29 referendum—was likely to feature in talks after a second new opinion poll suggested a majority of French voters were against the charter.

The EU constitution, signed by EU leaders in October, is meant to streamline the bloc's decision-making process and boost its role on the world stage.

In France, the constitution has been linked to an EU proposal to reform the service sector, from restrictions on hours to wages, which unions say will undermine Europe's welfare state.

Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson said there "was a need to have a discussion" on the proposal, adding the current one "will not fly."

An opinion poll suggests that most French voters would reject the EU constitution if a referendum were held today.

Such a rejection would be a huge political setback for the 25-nation bloc, 48 25 most supporter the constitution for it to take effect.

The summit, however, is meant to focus on creating jobs and growth as an agenda the EU's flagging economy.

EU leaders are expected to acknowledge that the bloc's broken economic performance had dwindled its plans, which were launched in 2000 five years ago, to become the world's most dynamic economy by 2010. The leaders instead endorsed the scaling down of goals.

A draft of the summit statement calls for "urgent action," and adds that it is "essential to ... refocus priorities on growth and employment" to ensure "an encounter area in which to meet and work." AP

Inq Buzz
Question of the Week
What, in your opinion, lies ahead for Manny Pacquiao?
Answers of at least 25 words as published in Tuesday's Inq Buzz, will earn owner an "Inquirer Mug!"
Inquirer text
name/age/city/message.
Text your answers to
2327 (Smart), 2327 (Sun), 233 (Globe).
(Please see if text messaging)
Mobile Inquirer members can visit www.inquirer.com.ph/mobile
Personal or company use only.
Inquirer ad rates@inquirer.com.ph
Mobile 2327 or 233 do not process SMS for mobile numbers.

10 sacks of explosives seized

[illegible] equipment recovery of the large amount of explosives that fooled a police group after the Abu Sayyaf group to conduct mass bombings in urban centers," the Armed Forces statement said.

Enough to wreck a building

A military bomb expert said the 10 sacks of explosives could cause the collapse of a two-story building.

"If properly assembled and the explosives are placed in a certain way, they could bring down a ... two-story building," said Lt. Col. Lito Tolentegan Jr., chief of the Explosives and Ordnance Division of the AFP National Capital Region Command.

He said the damage from such an bomb could be worse if it was set off in a crowded place.

Tolentegan said the blast from one-10th of the explosives "was enough to make the blast from a hanging [a basal firecracker]."

The explosives, which contained a substance called black powder, are considered "low explosive" devices, he said.

"This contains mud dust (Khodafy) [explains] and this Solomon are really planning something," said Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP public information chief.

Islam converts

He was referring to the ASG's most senior leader and to an Abu Sayyaf commander who had worked of most bombings in Western Mindanao. Following the deaths of ASG documents during the prison siege at Camp Bagong Diwa, almost two months ago.

The discovery of the explosives came a day after the arrest of Sanusi, who had been on the government's wanted list.

Sanusi is believed to be the same man identified as Umwal Marsilan Del Rosario Sanusi on the list of "wanted terrorists introduced by the government's then Secretary Hernando Perez.

Sanusi is reportedly the brother of Abdulla Sanusi a.k.a. Abdul or "al" the Raja Sulaiman Sawadjaan Movement, an extremist group of "Rajah Islam" converts.

The AFP said Sanusi was an Islam convert who was arrested some years ago in Isulan, Sarangani, but had been released on bail.

Sanusi was not presented to the media yesterday because the military could they were still questioning fellow-top operatives against the Raja Sulaiman group.

A big blow

"Definitely this is a big blow to (them) ... We think it will somehow degrade their capability to undertake their plans," Deputy Director Andres Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police, said on the phone.

Razon said the latest [set] disarmed the Abu Sayyaf's plans to carry out bombings."

Razon said the police would not let their guard down.

"We will still maintain vigilance, until a high alert level," he said, adding that the discovery of the alleged bomb materials did not necessarily mean the threat was over.

9 bombers still at large

The police earlier said at least nine bombers from two terrorist cells had been sent to Metro Manila and other key cities.

Both figures were later not found their whereabouts.

The operation where the explosives were seized was headed by Ahmad Santos, according to Police Director Robert Delfin, chief of the Directorate for Intelligence.

"The threat has been reduced for the time being," Delfin said.

As part of the heightened security alert, some 38,000 policemen have been deployed around the

HOT STUFF: 10 sacks of explosives with enough power to blow up a 2-story building are sealed by the Intelligence Service of the AFP (lo. Col. Lito Tolentegan is inspects the catch.

terrorists are in the final stages of planning an attack," according to DOJ Foreign and Communication Office.

"However, attacks could come in any time, anywhere in the Philippines," the FCO said in its website.

It noted that Philippine soldiers and police had been deployed in malls, churches and retail installations across Metro Manila for the Easter holidays.

'God is on our side'

Central Police District Director Ricardo Rubaran Jr. said the sacks of explosives recovered from the Barrio-ne house contained chemical which he said was similar to potassium chlorate.

Potassium chlorate is a compound containing potassium, chlorine and oxygen. It is used in some medicinal recipes for gunpowder. When mixed with some materials it could form a high explosive.

It was among the explosive materials used in the Bali, Indonesia, bombings in 2002 that killed almost 200 people.

The Bali bombings were blamed on the Southeast Asia organized terror network Jemaah Islamiyah, said to be on the Sayyaf partner in terror.

Rubaran said the discovery was a good sign that terrorist activities in the metropolis would be foiled by law enforcers.

"We're lucky. God is still on our side," he said. *Report's from Matt Carvajal, Jaime A. del Puerto and DAWN*

Doggone it, K9 boner creates panic at airport

By Nikko Dizon

AN ARANGUEREZ awaited customs and two aging, bomb-sniffing dogs named Sky and Mara set off alarm bells at the Manila Domestic Airport yesterday.

Shuffling around the airport amid heightened security, the mutts Sky and the black Mara apparently caught some suspicious scents coming from the airport's cargo area and set in the big dogs, awakening the possible presence of explosives.

Tension gripped the airport as the police and members of the Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD) rushed to the scene and cordoned off the area.

It was all a false alarm.

When it was opened, the airport's cargo contained nothing more than documents.

The baggage, it turned out, was carried by Northern Islands Cargo Food Store, who apparently absent-mindedly left it at the arrival area before he was to board a Cebu Pacific flight to his hometown.

The incident happened at around 9:30 a.m., said Brig. Gen. Angel Atienza, national general manager for security and emergency services at the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).

On seeing the unattended, stashed case, security guards and passengers, aware of government warnings that terrorists might strike this holy week, promptly called in the authorities.

The commotion held up traffic along the Domestic Road.

The two dogs are both Belgian Malinois and are trained and tested for 16 years old, Superintendent Ferdinand Bolaños of the 2nd Police District for Aviation Security, told the inquirer.

Dogs can be misled

Any of several factors could have led to the false alarm, Bolaños said.

One is the age of the dogs, another is that their "hunting" (their) ... had enough training, or the item sniffed might be contaminated, he said.

Another, for example, could give off an odor similar to that of gunpowder, Bolaños added.

He said that while dogs were trained to sniff for gunpowder and explosives, they also get cues from their handlers.

Dogs retested

"If the handler is tense, so will the dog be," he said.

Atienza said, "We will have the canines retrained."

The dogs, on the part, hinted there might be need to review the performance of the handler.

Suspect says . . .

[illegible] Solaiman gave the orders for [illegible] attacks commencement during the first week of March.

Solaiman's brother was described Rubaran, 25, as a bomb expert who served as the liaison officer of the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah with the Abu Sayyaf leadership.

Rubaran's claims are true, the ASG had apparently planned to launch new bombings in key Philippine cities even before the March 14 failed jailbreak at Camp Bagong Diwa, where at least 22 Abu Sayyaf detainees, including three senior ASG leaders, were killed.

The ASG has claimed responsibility for the Valentine's Day bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos which killed eight people and wounded more than 150.

It found the plans of Khadafy and Abu Solaiman," Rubaran told reporters speaking in Tagalog, showing a good grasp of the details.

'Blow up Mindanao'

"They wanted to blow up Mindanao, either of the two, Davao or Cagayan de Oro, and another one in Manila. They said the plan was to be carried out in the last week of March."

The military said Rubaran had been in the custody for five years, which might explain his fluency in English.

Rubaran told reporters Jaafani gave a certain MILF member P 100,000 each to conduct the bombing.

The military asked reporters to withhold the identity of the suspected MILF operative, but the ABS-CBN News Channel identified him as a certain Abdullah Ismail.

Asked if the latest plot involved another bus bombing, like the one that occurred in Makati last Feb. 14, Rubaran replied: "Maybe it's something like that because I just heard about the plan from them. Then they gave the remotes of the MILF for money."

'Crowded places'

He said he did not know which specific places were to be bombed.

The specific place was mentioned, except that it should be crowded places. It was not mentioned if it was a mall, a terminal or school."

Rubaran denied a military claim that he was the one who trained the MILF operatives.

He said it was Abdul Jaafani, another Jemaah Islamiyah operative who conducted the training.

Military and defense authorities have refused to directly link the MILF "to an organization" to terrorists, despite having arrested several MILF members for alleged terrorist acts.

Rubaran denied any participation in any planned bombings, stating he was formerly training.

Jaegalani alive

He admitted personally knowing the detained suspects in the Feb. 14 attacks, such as Angelo Trinidad alias abu Khalil, Gamal Baharon alias Sapay and Yagpal Bantarakhan Bay Kagan.

He said Jaegalani himself trained them next.

Rubaran said Jaegalani was well and alive and not wounded, contrary to the military's claim he was seriously hurt or killed in a military hunting in Maguindanao last year.

He said he was with Jaegalani and Solaiman during that raid. While he was seriously wounded, the two leaders, who were just a stone's throw from him, were unscathed, he said.

According to Rubaran, 27 Indonesian JI members are still training in the ASG's Camp Ishal Quirino, he said.

He also spoke of ASG members being sheltered in MILF territory.

Spare the children

During the 20-minute interview, Rubaran spoke calmly and repeatedly the shielded others asked if he wanted to be a state witness.

Rubaran sat in front of the camera, his hands cuffed under the table.

When asked if he was left to himself, he said, "No, something like that. Because I did it, I was really involved in the bombings."

When pressed to give a message to ASG members, he gave another thought-ends.

Then he said: "Don't push through with the plans because it hurts that many children were losing his. And civilians as that."

"Fight the war in the battlefields, like Jolo, so the children would be spared." *With reports from Matt Carvajal, Jaime A. del Puerto, DAWN*

Ailing Pope makes 1-minute, silent appearance

From page A1

The chief of the Pope's medical team, reacting to suggestions in the Italian media that the Pope's health had deteriorated suddenly, ruled out that John Paul might be sent back to the hospital after his Ole Sturgs 30 days ago.

"No hospitalization if John Paul II is planned," the ANSA news agency quoted Dr. Rodolfo Proietti as saying.

The Italian agency news agency quoting unnamed sources, said Tuesday that John Paul wasn't responding well to his medications and was vomiting. The agency said the pontiff was suffering from overall weakness and "worrying headaches."

"Unfortunately, things are not going as well as we would have hoped," a Vatican monsignor was quoted by Reuters as saying.

"It is clear the Pope is suffering a lot," said another cleric who works in the Vatican.

John Paul has scaled back his appearances since his back-to-back hospitalizations, and has designated cardinals to take his place during this week's busy Holy Week ceremonies.

Easter Sunday blessing

The Vatican only has confirmed one appointment for the Pontiff... an Easter Sunday blessing.

The Pope did not name a stand-in, however, for a Pope-of the Cross procession at the Colosseum on Good Friday, the day Christians commemorate Christ's passion and death.

The Pope, who also suffers from Parkinson's disease, which affects muscle control and makes it difficult for him to speak clearly, had hoped to be able to attend the mass.

Previous television officials said they had installed cables and other equipment in the Pope's apartment above St. Peter's Square for the possible transmission of a video in his room by the pilgrims gathered at the Colosseum.

The Pope has made three public appearances since being discharged from the hospital—his latest on Palm Sunday, when he blessed the crowd silently from his third-floor window.

During that appearance, the Pontiff grasped his hand to his head and pounded a lectern in apparent frustration over his difficulty to respond to the crowd.

It was the first time in 26 years as pope that he was unable to preside over the Palm-softening in Holy Week, the most important season on the Christian calendar and long one of his favorite appointments.

'Perfectly sound mentally'

While his physical condition is "fragile," John Paul is "perfectly sound mentally," Cardinal Camillo Ruini, who stood in for the Pope on Palm Sunday, said in an interview with the Italian magazine religious affairs weekly Famiglia Cristiana.

Ruini said the Pope "continues to carry out the acts of government and to announce the major decisions, as he has always done."

John Paul has been considering at the Vatican following the Feb. 24 throat surgery to insert a tube in his windpipe and ease his wound-breathing crisis in less than a month.

He still has that tube, known as a cannula, in his throat to help him breathe and medical experts have said he will most likely have to keep it there for the rest of his life.

Medical staff have to keep the tube clean and clear of secretions in order to avoid breathing problems and minimize the risk of infection.

The Pope's guests appearance the few times he has been seen has led to speculation in the Italian media that his condition has suffered a downpatback.

Vatican officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, have denied there has been any sudden crisis, but acknowledge the seriousness of his health outbreak.

No details

No details on his cause of health have been released since the Pope's return to the Vatican on March 13.

The Vatican, however, says the Pope is carrying out his major duties. On Tuesday it reported the Pope had named seven bishops to the Ivory Coast and Spain. Under church law, only a pope can name bishops.

The it is rare time when the Pope will be able to resume his regular activities. His only scheduled international trip, to a World Youth Day event in Germany in August, is highly doubtful, observers said. AP, Reuters

The Pope live on Easter

THE EASTER Mass and the "Urbi et Orbi" (To the city and to the world) Easter message of Pope John Paul II will be seen and heard live via satellite on Philippine television on Easter Sunday.

The National Office of Mass Media headed by Fr. Jim Reyes, S.J., said the telecast will be hosted over Channel 4 and Channel 5 from 4:20 p.m. to 6:45 p.m., on Channel 13, 7 to 8 p.m.; on Studio 23, 10:45 p.m. to 1 a.m., Channel 9, 12 p.m. to 1:15 a.m.; and Channel 7, 1:45 a.m. to 4:15 a.m. on Monday.

Luminous Cross of Grace rising in Quezon town

From page A1

The Aglungan townsfolk believe that grace from the enshrined Holy Eucharist in the tall, five-tier wood shrine in front of the municipal hall and in the struggle to rid their community of illegal gambling, corruption, terrorism, mental degradation, drug dealing, alcoholism and despondency over poverty.

The inspiration for building the sanctuary came in 2000, the same year a lavish, but complemented priest took over the San Isidro Labrador parish. Fr. Ritel Enriquez, better known as Father Pete, insisted he hasn't preached on morning, topsides and excessive drinking to the community.

"Aglungan can cleanse itself," said Enriquez, who has built a reputation as a then reformer. He told his flock that things can change when they accept that the guilt is because Christ is to follow in His ways.

Mysterious ways

The Aglungan faithful see the buildingof the sanctuary as a sign that the Lord looks with favor on the developments in their parish. Travelers to the parish now come from all over, and miraculous healings and stories of resurrections have started to abound.

"But God works in mysterious ways and we are those who are working on the project which is turning to reality in the fifth-class town of Aglungan in the impoverished and insurgency-wracked Bicolor peninsula.

Powerhouse of grace

Enriquez said the image of the Luminous Cross of Grace first came to San Isidro Labrador parish on Oct. 26, 2003 through Mercy Morales-based Agahengenio artist, Normandy Sabuco.

According to Enriquez, Sabuco presented him a copy of a painting of the Luminous Cross of Grace which he was commissioned to do by a foreign visitor, only based on messages that the visitor said came from the Blessed Mother Salvacion, Enriquez said. Just returned from a trip to the Vatican where Salvacion and Bishop Precious Castillon of Legaspi presented to the Pope John Paul II another copy of the painting.

Marian images

The painting has a luminous cross with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of Divine Will, at the center and at the four other Marian images are on the corners of the cross. Above it is a depiction of the coronation of the Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth by the Holy Trinity.

On aug. 7, 2004, a group of healers, missionaries and Marian devotees visited Aglungan to meet with Enriquez. The group was led by Cynthia C. Lam, a Marian devotee and director of the Department of Tourism Region 5 (Bicol) in Legaspi City. Four other Marian images are on the corners of the cross. Above it is a depiction of the coronation of the Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth by the Holy Trinity.

On aug. 7, 2004, a group of healers, missionaries and Marian devotees visited Aglungan to meet with Enriquez. The group was led by Cynthia C. Lam, a Marian devotee and director of the Department of Tourism Region 5 (Bicol) in Legaspi City.

Lam said the group agreed to open the door to the hospital after the Oblonds, who also has the so-called third eye, urged her to will the book to open in her mind. Lam said Oblonda asked her to look at the names and dates written on some of the pages. It became evident to her that Oblonda was also seeing the names at the same time.

Lam said the book opened to Page 7 and those she saw the date Aug. 21. Oblonda told her to open the book to Page 5. Lam said in her mind, she opened the book to Page 5, and there, a set of names appeared one by one, just like the names of actors appear in movie profiles.

List of names

The names were: Mang Joe Pichon (now deceased), healer Sidra Bajarbe, Bro Oblonda, Cynthia Lam, school teacher Rosario Enriquez, music healing teacher Ruth Emery and Fr. Ritel Enriquez.

It was strange, Lam said, to note that the knew everyone in the list. To find out what the others meant, she reached Father Enriquez who agreed to meet with her group. Besides her were Bajarbe, Pichon and Oblonda.

During their meeting, Lam informed Enriquez of the inspiration that occurred with her and Oblonda on separate occasions, about the Luminous Cross, with the image of the Immaculate Christ, the Sacred Host, running together in a seamless background. She said she also had repeated visions of Our Lady of Guadalupe between the time she saw the names in her mind and the time of the Aglungan visit.

Connectivity

It was then a delight for Lam to see that the San Isidro Labrador Church in Aglungan had the Sacred Host behind it on its altar. The altar was built in 1999 by fr. Noel Calmagrad.

She said she told Enriquez that it was also heartening for her to note that Aglungan, on the Bicol Peninsula, overlooks the Pacific Ocean on one side, and so the Chino Sea, on the other side. "I found out that Aglungan is a seaside community with a parish church that bears the Resurrected Christ and the Sacred Host!" she said, referring to the connectivity with her visions and Enriquez.

Collective visions

Lam said Enriquez later showed them the copy of the Luminous Cross of Grace painted by Sabuco. They were all astonished to see the painting as a close depiction of their collective visions, Lam said.

She said she was very elated upon seeing that the Luminous Cross also bore Our Lady of Guadalupe at its center as this image kept coming back to her before the meeting with Enriquez.

Inspiration

Inspirations on the building of the sanctuary were waved as so far back as 1990.

Enriquez said some parish issues told him that in 1990, the late Fr. Alodesio Bunsan, the former parish priest of San Isidro Labrador Church, dreamt about a structure in the form of a chalice and a Eucharist would be built beside the church.

Enriquez also said that he had contemplated on remodeling an old unfinished concrete bath beside the church in 1960 by Father Bunsan.

But on Sept. 12, 2004, Msgr. Oscar Isares, then provost of the Diocese of Legaspi City celebrated a Mass at the San Isidro Labrador and suggested to Enriquez that the building of a museum be built beside the church. It was the feast day of the Holy Name of Mary.

Design elements

Working on Monsignor Lesares's suggestion, Enriquez asked his Hadili law year to design a sanctuary of stone. Hadili used her husband Roldan were former residents of San Francisco, California. Family business and personal consultations prompted the couple to leave the United States and return home to the Philippines in 1992 with their two children.

Hadili said that upon arrival in Manila, she said a prayer. "I told Him I would change my life, that I would be a better mom and that would be my vowed, and I asked Him to point me out where he wants me to."

Offerings to the Lord

Hadili said sewers busy with all kinds of building labor to the brink of death several times in 1999. She said that each day since then had been opportunities for offerings to the Lord, like the sanctuary project.

Hadili, in collaboration with engineer Boy Estrado and the staff of Extra Builders, finished the design of the sanctuary in 30 days.

Hadili said Enriquez told her to make the sanctuary rise 120 feet high to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. Fourteen Stations of the Cross also mark the ascent to the top of the sanctuary.

Play of light, shadows

When she inspected the site, Hadili said she was delighted to see that the entrance was done in the San Isidro church have the figure of a chalice with a holy host on top, providing her an affirmation of her design.

Unknown to Enriquez, Hadili had had experiences in projects featuring light refraction and play of shadows. With the help of Raymond Sabuco, a solar-powered device will emit a 1,000-foot light beam in the sky up from the bottom of the sanctuary the stars at night.

The sanctuary's stone, skylights, light beams and movable steel panels on the 4-feet by 5- feet cross then becomes a play of reflections and illuminations.

Most striking

What was most striking in the final design were what they said were the divine affirmations of the project.

Hadili said a photo taken in Rome at the time of visit to the Pope by Bishop Castillon and Salvacion, showed a lightsaft figure that bears an uncanny resemblance to the shape of the sanctuary's structure as designed. It showed an "M" figure on top of which was a cross with light beaming at the center.

In November 2004, Hadili's daughter Jessica took photos and matched it with the sanctuary's front elevation. Much to their amazement, the proportions of the elevation fitted the reflection perfectly.

Not just another project

Hadili said: "The design started like any other project, no special occurrences, just another project, a sanctuary ... I understand that the following events are mystery. Our God calculate even whenever to explain those differences. I understands that this is God's project, we are invited to be partners in His Divine plan."

Community spirit

Hadili estimated the sanctuary project to cost P17 million. The architectural and engineering services are free. Hadili knocks to Aglungan once a month to oversee the construction.

The parishioners and supporters have contributed donations in terms of free labor and resources as time becomes ripe.

Supporters

Groups, such as the Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace headed by co-parishioners Dr. Pax Gonzaga and Ching Zapanta, the Saint-ignas Quality Centennial Foundation Inc., the Bergantines Marine Group, and Cadi Lupe group led by Alex Cacanan, are pitching in efforts together with Aglungan's Chamber-mates and other believers.

Gutenberg, a candlelight, recently came from the United States, where she solicited funds for the sanctuary. But the trip was not without suffering on her part. She sustained a bone fracture earlier to minor to a new back since but couldn't book a flight. "People involved in the project find great joy being part of it even as this week of God invites us to acts of sacrifices. The joy is in the offering," said Gutenberg.

Father Reuter

Gutenberg, Hadili and Lam recently sought an audience with the venerable Jesuit priest, Fr. James Reuter, to lend him on the project.

The Luminous Cross of Grace Sanctuary is an "amazing and source of a blessed to the world. It is shaped like a chalice and the Eucharist which is the symbol of the Triune Eucharistic Host," Reuter was quoted as saying. "It will be a prayer building for all, to unify the clergy, the different religious movements and sectors that help the sick and the poor. It will make the Filipino whole."

God's masterpiece

Enriquez believes the sanctuary to Aglungan is a done deed. It is God's project and His masterpiece, he said.

Where will the money come from? "He will provide," the senior priest said.

Enriquez invited to support the Luminous Cross of Grace Sanctuary are enjoined to call Dr. Pax Gonzaga at 815-9911, local 2307, 0916 Ms. Smith 997 4803, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, or 09286418181, 09159884431, or e-mail luminouscross@yahoo.com)

THE PAINTING of the Luminous Cross with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the center done by Alex Hadili who was commissioned by a missionary.

THE BAYANIHAN spirit is on full display as the citizens, counsel town of Aglungan in Quezon as even children help in the building of the sanctuary of the Luminous Cross of Grace.

Erring policemen ...

From page A1

crucifixion during an annual reenactment of Jesus Christ's final hours.

Dozens of Filipino devotees observe Good Friday by volunteering to be nailed to wooden crosses in what has become a macter attraction in Asia's most populous Roman Catholic country (See related story in Metro, Page A22.)

Absent without leave

The past, the United Nations regional police continued is going officers who have been absent without leave a dozen to sixteen days, sixteen by raising the Lenten diet, Senior Insp. Joanna Demeterio said.

Those absent for a short period are to undergo disciplinary measures by carrying a heavy wooden cross, under the proposal by Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Pomeroy said.

Those absent for 100 days should volunteer to be crucified—but they can have their hands and feet nailed by ropes rather than nailed down, Pomeroy said.

"Albano wants to take this time to forgive those who want to return to service," Demeterio explained. "This is a second chance being given to them and a chance for them to atone they are really sorry."

19 cops

The regional commander encouraged to the officers who have been absent without leave.

As of Wednesday, 19 policemen were candidates for carrying a cross at Camp Olivas police headquarters in San Fernando, Pampanga, Pomeroy said. Officers will be asked to wear their uniform trousers, a black T-shirt and a black hood to cover their faces during the procession. AP

Muslim volunteers to guard churches

By Margaux C. Ortiz

"GO DR, it is safe to pray inside your churches."

The head of the National Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council (NMPOCC) yesterday gave this advice to their "Christian brothers and sisters" amid reports that terrorists were target-ing churches this Holy Week.

The NMPOCC moves in response to the Manila Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council which was set up nine years ago.

NMPOCC Chair Dato Sanusi Salma Indanag yesterday said they had deployed a hundred Muslim volunteers in different Manila churches to look out for possible terrorists.

"I believe that we have the ability to recognize possible terrorists especially if their deeds to be members of the Islam faith," Atty. Indanag told the inquirer.

Indanag said the volunteers came from different Muslim communities in Metro Manila.

He added that he had offered the suggestion to PNP Director Director Chief Supt. Eulie Segalla to show that Metro Manila Muslims are "good, law-abiding citizens."

"We also want to prove that we care for our Christian brothers and sisters especially because this time of the year is very important to them," Indanag said.

The Muslim leader also said they would try to coordinate with National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Director Avelino Razon Jr. so they could deploy volunteers in other Metro Manila churches as well.

Arabiang, however, clarified that the volunteers would be posted outside the churches.

"We would like to assure them (Christians) that they could pray and worship inside their church without worrying about terrorist attacks," Indanag said. "We would be there to look out for them."

Arabiang said PNP officials led by Razon and Indanag briefed the volunteers on how to detect potential terrorists yesterday.

"The volunteers would surround the churches and grill suspicious looking individuals," Indanag explained.

The NMPOCC chief also said the volunteers were briefed on how to check vehicles for possible car bombs.

Arabiang said he designated 12 of their members to guard the Iglesia ni Cristo, Quiapo, and another 40 at the Baptist Church.

He added that the volunteers would be making the rounds of the other churches during the Holy Week.

"We make sure that we cover the major places of worship because the terrorists always target areas where there are plenty of people," Arabiang said.

He added that he would evaluate the batch of each of Metro Manila's 40 Muslim organizations to provide the PNP with their own volunteers in the would "protect" more churches.

"We had a dialogue on Wednesday with the PNP where we said we would also coordinate this activity with our brothers in other parts of the country," Arabiang said.

Keep your homes safe while you are away, cops say

By Tina G. Santos and Jocelyn R. Uy

GO AHEAD, take a break. But keep your home safe as you go on vacation this Holy Week.

Criminal elements, particularly robbers, usually take advantage of the moment knowing many homes are left unattended, said National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) director Avelino Razon.

"As much as possible don't leave your house unattended," Razon said. "Have somebody look after it. Otherwise, they should inform their barangay officials and seek regular patrols around their unattended residences."

Police cars deployed

Razon said he had directed the deployment of police cars to conduct police visibility patrols in barangays and subdivisions, in case of fire and in support of security personnel and barangay officials.

Meanwhile, Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, Western Police District director, called on residents to be vigilant by reporting to authorities suspicious individuals in their communities.

Bulaong said the WPD already deployed "secret agents" to different bus terminals and shopping lines in the North and South Bus Bot.

The WPD is also deploying more than 1,000 policemen including motorcycle and mobile patrol units.

Safe against fire

For his part, Pasay City fire marshal Nicanor Godines asked those leaving home this Holy Week to secure their property against fire.

Switching off home appliances during the guarantee that these would not cause fire, he told the Inquirer yesterday.

"Even though they are already turned off, but remained unplugged, there is still voltage coming in to the appliances," he explained, adding that this could lead to short-circuiting, which might cause a fire.

"As home yet, they must switch off the main fuse," he added.

He also reminded the public to check on electrical wirings and put valid for loads, which are causing the major sources of fire.

Candles, which would be widely used this Holy Week, must not be left unattended, he said.

Despite reminders of firefighters to the public, a fire broke out in Pasay City before dawn yesterday.

The blaze broke out in a room on the ground floor of the house of Melvin Salangsang at 398 Interior 6, Mabini.

Initial investigation revealed that some children were playing with a lit candle in the room, which was extremely engulfed in flames.

The fire, which started at 1:20 a.m., razed 30 houses and left 150 families homeless.

"The houses were partly concrete and the roof were made of light materials," Godines explained why the fire spread quickly.

Arson investigators said the fire was put out at 4:44 a.m. and placed damages at P1.5 million.

No one was reported hurt during the incident.

Homeward-bound for the Easter break, Metro Manilans crowd the metropolis' bus stations and ship terminal. Traveler below takes a catnap while waiting for her ride.

Cops use guilt trip on hoods

By Nancy C. Carvajal and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WHEN all else seem to have failed, criminal troublemakers fear is invoked for them.

Today, when Northern Police District officials held the third year of their system of the activities of the state, the city would take them through a depressed community, which they consider assurance for Good reason.

Senior Supt. Rufino Dejia explains why, "If they [criminals] could not be stopped by manmade laws, maybe they could be stopped by reminding them of God's authority."

Twelve mini 10 police officials and two barangay chairmen, will be carrying a 25 kilogram wooden cross on a three-kilometer trek, which will pass by Libis Espina to Caloocan City.

The police said Libis Espina was home to troublemakers.

"Baka maisip na dasal," Dejia said.

Newly appointed district director Senior Supt. Head Bernardo will lead the march, Dejia said.

In Muntinlupa City, police officials said their men will be going around the 14 police precincts, where a picture of the cross has been erected.

"This is the time for us to reflect about our relationship with God," city police chief Rolando Bajan Jr. told the Inquirer.

City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said a morning prayer will be held at police headquarters near City Hall at 7 a.m.

From there, policemen will ride every precinct.

City Hall employees are also expected to join the rite.

"We are on full alert. I thought why not we hold our own Stations of the Cross? Everyone is present anyway," Bajan said.

No special treatment —MMDA

By Terry V. Quismundo

WHAT special plates? What exemption?

Special license plates, such as those bearing names of organizations and other agencies, are an added subject to the members making scheme, officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said this week.

"The MMDA does not give any exemption to any person whatsoever. If it does, then why can't it give the same privileges to other groups?" said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations United executive director.

Vergel de Dios explained that motorists who had bought plates bearing "Key Lolod" and the initials "TMC" (Traffic Management Group) had been asking about number coding exemptions.

"Even who tell those plates [I] legally make the assumption that users are in prospective buyers. He not buy from them, because they are illegal," he said of those plates that have proliferated in Metro Manila.

Thus, motorists with special plates would be cited for a traffic violation when they are caught playing the roads on days their regular license plates are they disinfected, Vergel de Dios said.

Box of groceries causes stir at bus station

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PULSE alerts.

An unattended package that disrupted operations at a bus terminal in Pasay City was not a bomb but a box of groceries, Pasay police said.

It was at 1:30 a.m. yesterday when a lady guard of Victory Liner noticed a box near the dispatcher's area and the comfort room, prompting the security officer Jessie Llaneras.

Members of the Pasay special response and bomb team, who immediately responded to the area, found out that it was just a box of grocery items, he told the Inquirer yesterday.

The box was later claimed by a passenger who was bound for Dagupan City, Pangasinan.

The incident caused to panic among passengers, said Senior Inspector Agustino Almonte of the city's police community project (SPO).

"There were just a few passengers at that time," Almonte said, adding that passengers only began to flock in the bus terminal in the afternoon.

However, they are not taking any chances, he added.

The 24/07 team, at present, is going around all bus terminals in Pasay City including the Philtranco bus terminal in Libis and the bus stations at the Pasay Rotonda.

Philtranco buses carry passengers bound for Bicol, while the buses at the Pasay Rotonda transport Cagayan bound and Isabela bound passengers.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency agents backed up by drug-sniffing dogs have also been making the rounds of bus terminals in the city, Almonte said.

Special Action Force members have been detailed to all the bus terminals in the city while baggage searchers were kept on guard, he continued.

"So far, it is peaceful in our area," he said.

However, the police would continue to watch over the bus terminals as passengers return from vacation.

Meanwhile, at the Victory Liner bus terminal, security measures remained tight.

Baggage inspections and body searching by Pasay police and the terminal's security guards continued.

"We don't allow passengers who refuse the inspections to board our buses," said Imperial.

Private cars have not been allowed into the terminal so that everybody would undergo going inspection, he added.

Dentist gets back condo

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE COURT of Appeals has upheld the ownership of dentist Joseph Lim over an Ortigas condominium unit that was being claimed by officers of the disbanded Civil Implementing Center of the Philippines (CIOC).

In an 11-page ruling, the appellate court's Special Sixth Division upheld a voluntary and discharge Commission ruling which declared that Lim, former CIOC president, and his wife Cook Ling Lim were the legitimate owners of the condominium unit in the Gold Loop Towers in Ortigas, Pasig City.

The tribunal also junked the CIOC's charge that Lim violated the Corporation Code when he acted as the group's president and treasurer at the same time in 1994.

"The claim of the petitioner that [Lim] committed misappropriation of the corporate assets, misrepresentation in connection with the mortgage and conveyance of Unit 10C31 of the Gold Loop Towers Condominium is unsubstantiated and verifies lacks documentary proof," said the decision penned by Justice Guy Bellosillo.

God favors no religion or race

ON TARGET

Anthony Bello

FR. ESTEBELAZ Soto, a priest in the Archdiocese of Manila, once gave birth a name of Metaphysical Soto, having converted to Islam.

It's rare for a Catholic to be converted to Islam. Much rarer still—perhaps a million to one—does a Catholic priest renounce his faith and join Islam.

But it doesn't matter. God is God no matter what you call the Supreme Being.

Whether it be Allah, Yahweh, Bathala, Dios, it's still the same Deity we all worship.

God doesn't care what your religion is. He only cares for you.

There is no such thing as the "true religion" at each people as "the chosen ones."

Religions or people claiming to be the direct descendants of God are hallucinating.

Pope JP II had chosen a particular religion and a particular people as his representatives on earth, who didn't do just enough into single race?

Why did he create Chinese, African, Caucasians, and Asians?

It's high time religions taught their followers that there are only one kind of worshipping God and those ways are not wrong, just different.

As different as the color of one's skin from another human being who comes from another continent.

I watched a movie where one of the characters asked another what his religion was.

The guy who was asked said he didn't have any religion because "religion divides people."

How true. Instead of uniting the human race, religion divides. Christians versus Muslims, Christians versus Protestants, Sunni Muslims versus Shiite Muslims.

All of us come from Him.

METRO

MMDA wants extra week for pink fences

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A LITTLE more time.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) may need another week to further observe the effects of its experimental pink fence scheme on traffic-choked Edsa, according to MMDA Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna.

"It is possible for us to extend by another week, because our third week fell on days when there was really not much traffic," Lacuna told the Inquirer the other day.

Monitoring

The agency had set a three-week observation period for its pink fence scheme after it began installing the steel barriers early this month.

The move was meant to curtail loiter city buses on the two outer lanes of Edsa for picking up and dropping off passengers at yellow lines the MMDA had established on the lanes.

The first portion of the avenue to be fenced was Edsa's southbound portion in front of Camp Crame, where steel fences covered a distance of more than one kilometer, according to Lacuna.

The west-end-six phase, he added, was meant to gauge whether or not the pink fences worked, by determining its effect on the traffic flow.

Fine tuning

After the observation period, the MMDA was set to fine-tune the scheme to make it work better.

The end of the observation period, however, fell on a Holy Week when the MMDA expected roads to have light traffic supposedly toward the weekend, said Lacuna.

Less traffic

"Naturally, there won't be too much traffic," said Lacuna, referring to major roads that would have fewer vehicles on the road since many motorists would be spending the Holy Week break at home or in rest and recreation spots.

Given such a traffic situation, a conclusive study on the pink fences may not be effectively made, the deputy chair said.

Thus, more time would be needed to see whether or not the steel barriers indeed made traffic along Edsa worse, a frequent complaint echoed by motorists.

Just like any other changes —like the controversial 12-seat ride or any geometric improvement—these would naturally be problems at the onset, and there would definitely be some period of adjustment," said Lacuna.

Best intentions

"But when motorists already get used to the idea, that's when they will see what our intentions were when we implemented this program.

"Our only intention was the safety and convenience of both motorists and pedestrians alike," he said.

No more delays in Northrail project—GMA

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered bonding and railway authorities to clear within three months the seven-kilometer railway line from Caloocan City to Valenzuela City (if locator standing in the area to speed up the implementation of the North Luzon Railways Corporation (Philnor) project.

Mr. Arroyo issued the directive in case-stricken tracking the turnover of the responsibility of maintaining the 1.7 kilometer Northrail line cleared of informal settlers from the National Housing Authority to railway officials.

The cleared areas include four barangays in Malabon City: Barangays Acacia, Tagalog, Tenorio and Potrero, according to a statement issued by Malacañang.

Some 2,000 squatter from these barangays had already moved to relocation sites.

President Arroyo inspected the cleared area in Barangay Tagalog and thanked officials involved in the project, which aims to put up a new railway system that will eventually run the stretch between Metro Manila and the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga.

Accompanying the President during her inspection trip were Vice President Noli de Castro, NHA General Manager Federico Lana, Philippine National Railways General Manager Jose Ma Ancheta Jr, Malabon City Mayor Canuto Oreta, and Northrail President Jose Cortes Jr.

Cortes told President Arroyo issued the directive to ensure that there would be no further delays in the project. He said heavy equipment to be used for the rail tracks were due to arrive this month, including four drilling machines, a compressor, and goodies and concrete.

Farming in city? Why not, say QC officials

By Dj Yap

NEED additional income in Quezon City?

How about farming?

Plans are underway to promote farming as an alternative source of livelihood in an urban setting.

The success of the demonstration farm in Sanvicente de San Vicente de Ferrer, Teachers Town has encouraged Quezon City officials to introduce urban agriculture in the city, according to the local government's Urban Farming Office.

The garden recently yielded some ₱2,000 in gross income from the sales of the initial vegetable harvest from this 8-by-8-m. raised agricultural technological bed.

Vegetable crops including lettuce, eggplants, tomatoes, hot peppers, bitter melons and cauliflowers have been planted in the garden that occupies an area of more than 1,000 square meters.

In her report to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr., City Agriculture Officer Virginia Peñaranda called the demo project a success, after yielding a net income of almost ₱1,000 from an initial capital outlay of just over ₱1,000.

Peñaranda said the project was truly innovative since they had used recycled materials in building the garden. Only one laborer took care of the garden, she added.

Belmonte expressed optimism about the future of the project.

In a statement, the mayor vowed to expand the city's urban farming program to include coconut lands in deforested areas to provide additional income to the community.

One of the areas being considered is the Payatas dump which the local government wants to convert into a model community.

SPORTS

E-mail: sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Paquiao a bigger loser–to Murad

'He makes Don King look like a saint'

By Solvert L. Lagumbay, Correspondent

BEFORE losing by unanimous decision to Mexican Erik Morales last Sunday, Filipino ring idol Manny Pacquiao was already a bigger loser—and of all people—to his US promoter Murad Muhammad.

In an interview several days before the fight, Pacquiao's US trainer Freddie Roach had said Murad, contrary to common practice, will be receiving the pay-per-view (PPV) upside of all percent reserved for the Gerdan fighter.

"Before Manny signed his last contract with Murad, Bob Arum called me up and he negotiated this deal with me. It's the exact same pay day we're making now: a guarantee, plus 40 percent of the upside (after the break-even of the PPV money). The upside was going 100 percent to Manny but now the upside is going to Murad Muhammad," Roach said.

Guarantee

Roach also told boxing writer Joe Stein in the same interview that the outgoing Ring Magazine featherweight champion was to receive a guarantee of $1.75 million—the biggest ever purse for Pacquiao.

Now, just days after the announced Fight at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, the figures are already coming out of the woodwork, and they point to Murad getting $2.8 million from Pacquiao's PPV share and the Filipino getting nothing.

Estimates

Roach cited that based on local estimates, the Pacquiao-Morales fight should have snagged some 400,000 pay-per-view buys and at $44.95 per buy (the PPV should amount to $17.98 million.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao, who endured a deep cut over his right eye from a headbutt in the fifth round, was left with only $412,359 ($165,871,000) out of his purse after deducting the taxes and shares of the members of Pacquiao's team.

"Mutad may have made more than Manny for sure, he didn't risk his life. That's horrible. This guy makes Don King look like a saint," Roach said.

Taken to task

Roach's assertions seemed to bolster an earlier report that Dacquiao had taken Muhammad to task after it was reported that while Morales was getting 40 percent of the PPV share and Bob Arum 20 percent, it was Muhammad who took the 40 percent which was supposed to go to Pacquiao.

"We'll talk with Murad (think he is one of those guys who don't really care about the fighter more so than the money," Roach said yesterday in an interview.

Roach also cited Muhammad's seeming lack of support for his fighter, saying: "Like the trip to the hospital, myself and Shelby (Finkel) stayed for four hours, while Murad was counting his money in his suite."

Finkel, Pacquiao's new manager, Roach and Manny went to a hospital where doctors suggested a corrective plastic surgery to close the deep cut Pacquiao suffered in the fight.

Roach revealed for the first time, however, that they have tentatively stated Erik Morales a bit and that the bleeding of Pacquiao's cut did not stop.

Rematch

"No comments, we lost, he won and we are definitely looking at a rematch in September," he added.

He also assured fans that should a rematch be made, Pacquiao will definitely be wearing his favorite Reyes gloves.

Roach also cautioned not that "there was a lot of noise during the Manny fight and it was difficult to get Manny to listen with all the loud speaking and those guys with no knowledge about Manny screaming instructions. All those guys (were) ripping us(e) my job."

PACQUIAO works with his US promoter Murad Muhammad during the weigh-in before his fight with Mexican Erik Morales Sunday

PILIPINO tennis pros Eric Taino (center) and Cecil Mamiit (right) will be playing for the country in the SEAG this November. At left is junior ace Kyle Joshua Chanlon. ERIK MELIA

Mamiit, Taino to anchor RP SEAG net bid

By Manong R. Castillo

TWO US-born tennis players with impressive world rankings will be suiting it dream by playing for the Philippines in the Southeast Asian Games this year.

The Philippine Tennis Association, in fact, has now started screening.

"Our goal is to win one or two gold medals (in the SEAG)," said Philta president Buddy Andrada yesterday. "But now that they are here, we are now looking at sweeping the men's event for four gold medals."

Andrada earlier presented Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino as the new members of the national team in the biennial meet that converges in Manila and three other key cities in November.

Dream

"It's a dream to be here, playing for the country," said the 20-year-old Mamiit, who was born and raised in Los Angeles in the United States but traces his roots to Mandaue, Laguna and Ilocos, Quezon.

"Thanks for giving us the opportunity for running to do well for the Philippines," said Taino, a lefty who resides in Jersey City, New Jersey. "I will be an honor playing for my country."

The duo will also play for the Philippines in the Davis Cup in advance in July if the Philta can secure the approval of the ITF regarding the players' change in citizenship status.

Andrada disclosed that Mamiit and Taino already have Philippine passports, which came very soon both were born in the US who their parents were still Filipinos.

Mamiit and Taino, regular campaigners in the ATP Tour in the US, will finally be wearing the national colors after fulfilling prior contractual terms to the United States Tennis Association.

Mamiit looked up Andrada's opinions, especially with Thai superstar Paradorn Srichaphan likely to skip the SEAG in favor of the money-rich Tour.

Experience

"We've seen these Southeast Asian players in action and we have a lot of experience (playing) against them," Mamiit said. "And the biggest thing going for us right now is that we know how to prepare against these guys."

"We hope it carries over to the SEA Games."

The SEAG has cut down to four the gold medals in tennis—two each in the team and ladies' events. But there's a proposal to restore the men's and ladies' team events and the mixed doubles.

Mamiit and Taino will play singles and doubles, and Philta now formerly approved, will campaign in the team and mixed doubles events as well.

Andrada hinted that the leading candidates to fill the two remaining slots in the men's team are Johnny Arellia and Ed Tierra, while Czarina Mae Arevalo and Jil Gretchen Sajonia will most likely occupy the first two ladies' slots.

The Philta had pursued Mamiit a few years back for the Asian Games, but negotiations fell through due to the reported high price demanded by the 5-foot-6 talent, who once beat the likes of Michael Chang and An-

(MAMIIT, A-3)

Tigers dump Richards

By Jane Navarro

AFTER dropping three straight games, the Coca-Cola Tigers finally came to their senses and sent the inefficient Aga Richards packing.

Bobal Gloschkl, a 6-foot 6-in rider agreement, will replace the 6-foot 10 Richards in a bid to boost the campaign of the Tigers, who have only a win to show so far coming.

Coach Eric Altamirano said the 205 lb Hendrix is arriving tomorrow from from a stint in the Continental Basketball Association.

Hendrix, who played for the Yakima Sun Kings in the CBA, will join the Coca-Cola practice early next week and plunge in to action when the Tigers meet the Shell Turbochargers on Wednesday (March 30).

After losing his 1st. Larry Brid ley during the opening of the 2005 Great Moundor PBA Power Conference, the Tigers lost three in a row against some teams San Miguel Beer, Purefoods and Barangay Ginebra.

Richards, who averaged 11 points and 11.3 rebounds in four games, wasn't a big factor against the Tigers' loss especially over the Beermen.

The Tigers are presently tied with the Alaska Aces at eight k place.

Noted 1997-98 Most Coca-Cola Conference Player of the Year, the 27-year-old Hendrix was Barangay Ginebra's leading scorer, averaging 19.9 points in his final season.

Roaming reports showed that Hendrix, whose strongest offensive weapon is a deadly jumpshook in the paint, also has a decent outside shooting from even beyond 23-feet.

Hendrix also played for Huntsville Flight in the 2002-2003 National Basketball Development League along with Jermaine Jackson, Edwin Dotado and Glenn Dragon (Oakwood Premier), Dante Tolosa (Manila Diamond Hotel), Jun Alvin Cruz (Welle Wende 8), Rhic Bajaro and Tiong Phawn Pablo Verde 6), Lenny dela Cruz and Ryalel Flores (Lemery Village), Dudee Lapio (Pharex Base Continental in Sampler Point), Roderick Ramirez and Willie Jervillen (Orchard Golf and Country Club), Reynele Tolentino (Willborough), Sidney Belleo/Nelle Verde (Country Club) and Alvin Jimenez (Lipa City).

Registration forms are available at the Dunlop Manager Interim timeline office (893-2727) and at all camp area.

RICHARDS: Early exit

Revolutionary concept

THE CONCEPT automatically becomes a revolutionary because it is a first in the Philippines.

I refer to the Pay-Per-View (PPV) system that his Angeles City and other parts of Pampanga and the country during the classic Pacquiao-Morales fight last Sunday, March 20.

While most of Metro Manila had to labor through hours of television viewing before finally knowing the outcome of the bout, virtually all of Pampanga knew the result hours before the fight would be aired on regular TV showing over ABS-CBN and Solar Sports.

The secret is in the Pay-Per-View TV.

In contrast to the regular TV viewing of fights held abroad where they are shown in as on a "slightly delayed basis" but which is not really "slightly delayed" but very much delayed, the PPV gives us the fights on TV exactly the minute the fight starts from the arena of battle.

No advertisements.

No commercials.

No interruptions.

All boxing.

All action.

All thrills.

Very common in America for decades already, the PPV system has been introduced in the country by an entrepreneur businessman named Dennis Anthony Uy, a thirty-something from Angeles City.

"But as long but my system has also eliminated thieves commonly victimizing my legitimate cable providers," said Dennis.

The thievery of cable lines, he said, is the handiwork of cable linemen themselves.

"They collude with customers by securing clients of free installation of the system for a fee, without the cable provider knowing about it," he added.

Dennis also said his system does away with satellites, which is the common practice among many households wherein one cable line is split into many lines within a house and hooked to several TV sets.

"What is able to monitor all cable lines in my house and it can detect splitters or multi-cable lines that cable providers a substantial amount of money every year," Dennis said.

Already in practice in Angeles City and many parts of Pampanga is a card similar to a cell phone card that can be obtained for only P95 and good for a one-month use of a cable hook up to Destak/ ACCTN.

During the annual conference in Cebu in ordering more than 1,000 or so cable providers in the country, Dennis Uy's system became an instant hit.

Already orders of his system, which he calls the Total Addressable System—BIG for short—have been flooding the offices of Dennis.

In the recent Pacquiao-Morales fight above, seven cities were able to obtain Destak/ DSI and served over the PPV to the thrill and satisfaction of their clients. They are, aside from Angeles and San Fernando in Pampanga, the cities of Tigaro, Cagayan de Oro, Legaspi, and Tagaig (The Fort), Baer in Carmenco Norte and the provinces of Cambales.

Indeed, it will not be long when the entire country will start enjoying the excitement of PPV. Gone will be the days when we are troubled by cable thieves with enormous profits while robbing our favorite Pacquiao do battle with the world's best boxers.

Here's a plus to Dennis Anthony Uy, whose creativity and investments has made us proud again to be a Filipino.

***

FOOTBALL: Rudy and Ronnie Salud, Ronnie Aquino, George Alcantara, Mahni Fitz Muriel Ernesto Mercado, Shell coaches Leo Austria and Danyong Mendoza, Hoops Marianne Valerio, Lito Orillano, Ricky and Nino Endrinal, Ricardo Rivera, Hendrix Pineda, Shell players Wesley Wilson, Arlene Dumaya and Ronald Tabal, Ed Picson and Sol Jorda were among many Mandaluo who were not only treated to a delightful PPV viewing of the Pacquiao-Morales fight last Sunday, Equally satisfying and unforgettable were typical Pampanga dishes served to them by Secretary Ed Panlilio and his very gracious, ever-smiling wife. Kimyang, or Spencer's Boots & Bar in Angeles City. For openers, we're-born liquor with mashed, unpeeled and eggplant, asian-on tilapia skin; adobo sugpo; and, clockwise: kalalak, Mimyang's sing into a knockout. For lunch, again-this, roasted bits and tilapia, Spencer's Special Bing and kare-kare. Food galore and a classic Pampino fight, free on Channel 67 of Destak/ Anthony Uy's ACCTN, what more could you have asked for on a Sunday such as last Sunday? Since McTavish, my partner with Sunny Lopez in the pre-fight TV show of the Pacquiao bout, understood it only too well when I said to invite me his invitation for a "nightcap" at his Royal Mansion restaurant in the City of Angels. Promise, Bruce, I won't say no the next time you invite me again. Deal?

11th Dunlop Tennis Camp

FORMER Southeast Asian Games gold medalists Roland Ito, Aristotle Sauri and JLI Nuevo and national coaches Martin Miro, Dino Alva and Cito Garcia will lead the 11th Dunlop Tennis Camp scheduled from April to June all over Metro Manila and some parts of Luzon.

Lessons for beginners, advanced and intermediate players will be conducted by Ito, Miro, Garcia and Sat Cancio the Ooh Filipino Tennis Court and Arlington Park. Alva will be at the Alva Tennis Center in San Pablo City, Sauri at Ateneo University and Suaoi at South City Center in Biñan, Laguna.

Other instructors are Poh Hipolito (College de San Augustin), Edwin Custodio and Glenn Dragon (Oakwood Premier), Dante Tolosa (Manila Diamond Hotel), Jun Alvin Cruz (Welle Wende 8), Rhic Bajaro and Tiong Phawn Pablo Verde 6), Lenny dela Cruz and Ryalel Flores (Lemery Village), Dudee Lapio (Pharex Base Continental in Sampler Point), Roderick Ramirez and Willie Jervillen (Orchard Golf and Country Club), Reynele Tolentino (Willborough), Sidney Belleo/Nelle Verde (Country Club) and Alvin Jimenez (Lipa City).

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Cory suggests telethon to boost Games' budget

By Jasmine W. Reyes

AQUINO

GEMS who "donated" her two iconic worth to the country's bid to raise over a billion pesos for the Southeast Asian Games.

Former President Cory Aquino suggested to Sen. Sotero "Potong" Laurel, the Philippine Olympic Committee president, that "hoping" Cojuangco, a telethon to May to help the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee reach its target of P1.2 billion to handle the biennial meet.

This may remind yesterday by a member of the Philippine marketing arm, who added that the group is seriously considering the suggestion, even to the point of mapping out strategic plans as to how to go about it.

The marketing group is eyeing a month-long campaign, which over 3000-4, 3PM-9 and BIG 92, the three main broadcast outlets that will air the Games. A two-hour telecast featuring the country's top athletes will be used to kick off the nationwide pledging activity.

But for television, which aims to reach the unmapped public market—in just one of the activities the Philoss has lined up in an attempt to meet the target budget.

"All the activities will go full blast in April," said Boy Santiago, Philoss marketing consultant.

"We're just finalizing the details to all our run-up activities," added Pete Gana, Philoss marketing committee head. "We're deep in discussion with the sponsors."

During the telethon, audiences will watch donations and personality take the calls of the viewers. Interested parties may then send cash donations through dedicated hotlines.

The live program will run from 1-8 p.m. seven days and will also feature entertainment numbers and segments on the national athletes' preparations for the Games.

Aquino is no stranger to the Games. It was under her term that the country last hosted the biennial meet in 1991.

The Philoss marketing committee announced it has achieved half of its target of P600 million from the government and private sponsors during the official marketing launch on March 15.

Other marketing activities lined up are the caravan and mall tours in key cities in Metro Manila, Cebu and Bacolod.

"Since the Games will be multi-venue, we want to create maximum awareness," said Gana.

Time-based promotions will also be launched in two weeks.

"We're having a nationwide contest for people to come up with the Games' slogan and theme song for the Philippine staple, our official mascot," said Santiago. "We will announce the details soon."

Jins seek overall title

Attempt a SEAG record haul of eight gold medals

PAIOT Antoinette Rivera leads the RP team.

By Mars Anthony Reyes

BOSTON by a silver the last time around, the Philippine taekwondo team hopes to surpass the 1991 haul of eight gold medals and win the sport's overall crown in the coming Southeast Asian Games.

The was the target listed by national training director and Olympic hopes medalist Stephen Fernandez yesterday.

Fernandez hopes to gain such feats as a lined up for the mark national team, which narrowly missed the overall title to Vietnam during the 2003 SEA Games when the host edged the Filipinos with just a single silver medal after winning five gold apiece.

Reminded and the three-up duels last month when 10 members of the national squad, including Olympians Thanida Go and Mary Antoinette Rivera, fly to Spain for the World Championships.

Also in the lineup were Dag Sheik, Zaelan Padilla, JE Rivera, Earnest Sinclaire, Abe Briones, Junior Abra, Aphrodite Balbuena and Lorraine Catalan.

They will next visit Rome for a month-long training and bout camp, which coincide with their participation in the prestigious Grenoble Open.

"We are working on their [overall championship]," said Fernandez. "But we can't say before we can achieve it because we have the right mix of veterans and newcomers, plus the fact that the SEA Games will be held here."

The country has dominated the taekwondo competitions since 1991 in Manila and the 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, but the Manila edition, the RP has took away half of the 16 gold medals at stake.

Taekwondo, which will be held in Cebu City in one of the sports disciplines where the country is expected to put up a big fight, also features Gash and Judo, boxing, wushu and basketball.

Meanwhile, the national basketball team has still not started its training camp but officials are confident their top-ranked Indonesian players will be there. But they haven't yet received head coach Rincon Asanza.

"I think it's a reality check on our part," Asanza said the business during the break to maximize lucid last week. "We realized that we still have a lot to work on in terms of improving our game."

Only Lloyd Tiamzon managed to squeeze out a victory in the men's singles, while the [illegible] Tiamzon teaming mates of siblings Erwin and Rosemarie Ammerlan, and Ronnie and Paolo Chisbara split their matches in the mixed doubles.

Asanza said the 14-man team will be finally start its training March 29 with a rigid all-week program at the Chinkadliffe and the Philsports.

The chasers for a SEA Games gold, according to the 34-year-old coach, remain slim as the SEAG Federation scrapped the team event, leaving nationals to struggle against world-class Indonesians and Malaysians in the men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles.

SPORTSWATCH

ISH bet wins boys' 16-under title

MY LIMA DOME, Samuel Mariel and Joshua Sam to advance and Nazeel Ignacio [illegible] yesterday to assist the boys' 16-under title in the Don Bosco Makati-Edgar Cop Group Tennis Championships at the PLE national courts. In other matches, Alex Sam Ong Ng survived Kevin Sanna, 7-6 (5), 5-4, for the 14-under title, Jonas Lorenzo Farnan prevailed over Tim Pinero, 7-5, 6-3, for the 12-under title and Ericbanie Jacob Lagmay survived Prichie Macatiag, 7-5, 7-5, for the senior 10-under crown.

Misamis Oriental golf slated

THE PHILSTAR/INQ. Government of Misamis Oriental in cooperation with San Miguel Corp. and Smart Communications holds the first Misamis Oriental Golf Tournament on April 1-3, 2005 at Puerto del Sol Golf and Country Club as part of the yearlong Binirayan Jubilee celebration. Golf enthusiasts from both the government and the private sector are expected to grace this tournament. Prizes are for grabs includes a Ford Lynx sedan for the overall low gross prize and over P250,000 worth of other prizes. Gov. Oscar S. Moreno will be opening the tournament with a ceremonial tee-off at 8:00 a.m. on April 2.

Go named Asean chess VP

MEETING: Dioma Federation of the Philippines president Go Teng Kok was awarded unanimously as vice president of the Asean Chess Federation, a member of the world governing body of chess. Gen. BOC president Epimaco Lorenzo, who is based in Malaysia, informed Go of the Federal's new delegation for the organization, which convened at the tournament of the games in the region. The announcement also supplements the optimal result of chess in the country after the discipline was endorsed for regular membership in the Philippine Olympic Committee.

CSB, Miriam, St. Scho WNCAA champs

COLLEGE of St. Benilde, Miriam College and St. Scholastica's College have emerged as overall champions in their respective divisions in the WNCAA-2005 season. Juniors champion Old reinforced Rizal Technological University and basketball and volleyball dominated Lyceum of the Philippines with victories in athletics, tennis and swimming. Juniors winner Miriam was the winningest among the three division champions. St. Scho bagged the midgets overall trophy over Miriam and CSB. The WNCAA-2005 season was crowned by Rizal Technological University athletic director Nilo Ramos, Jr. Mariano Flores, 83 SEA Games and Gabi Lapa, in cooperation with Gatorade, Goldilocks, Mother, Milkasa, Citibank and Discovery Spa.

SEABA Basketball League president Robert Jr. (center), NBC secretary general Tim Palma (left) and NBC chair Louie Bisnar put their hands together after finalizing the Bale Warriors' participation in the regional tandem.

Mamiit, Taino...

(Turn page A19)

ditz Agpaoi and has a runner-up finish at the AIA 9[illegible] title.

Andrada runner that there were no negotiations of that sort when the Phillie finally succeeded in getting the approval of the two to join the 10th squad.

Talked, the losing tiun-tennis head, that cost total of $[illegible] (roughly 95.5 million) is being earmarked by the association for the preparation and training of both teams.

Mamiit and Taino are given $50 hotel allowance and a per diem of $[illegible] every time they play in competitive meets. Their regular allowance in the AFP base is at least $3 weeks on the road.

Meanwhile, Kyle Joshua Smelser was invited to join the 'ZF' International 14-under Amateur Training Team to play an several ITA events in Europe in June and July.

Smelser was also present during the presentation.

Abap sets youth tilt

THE MAKATEN Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) holds the National Youth and Juniors Championships in Pasay City this May in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The annual event, which Abap President Manuel C. Lopez said will also serve as an audition for new national boxers, will be held May 14 to 21.

Up for grabs are titles in four youth categories—kids (11 weight divisions), school boys (2[illegible], under [illegible] CUB, and junior [illegible]—as well as 13 weight classes in female categories for bouts over 17 years but under 24.

Entries to the contest are now being accepted at the Abap office at the administration building of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. For more details, call 5225487 or 5224567 or Pastor Wijangco mentioned, headed by his mentor Boger Gonzales (0[illegible]) 0[illegible] and (0[illegible]) 09[illegible].

Warriors eye strong NBC finish this time

THE BOLO Warriors have promised to come back with a vengeance in the second season of the National Basketball Conference (NBC) which starts on April 26.

"We started strong but faded going into the [illegible] final push," said Bale Basketball League president Robert Uy. "We'll rather have a slow start but a strong finish this time."

The Warriors, who reared to a 5-1 start last year, lost to the Hyatt Centre for the second round of the southern division.

Uy revealed that Bale will put up an all-foreign team. Old villains Eduardo Alledo Jr., Elmo Lwanda and NBC's scoring leader, Carlos Saroza Jr., will spearhead the Warriors.

Bale will hold a tryout on March 26 at the Bale Sports Complex with coach Jimbo Thompson supervising the event. Interested players may contact Mr. director Bruno Ladrido at (0[illegible]) 3[illegible] and Brenda Ortiz at (0[illegible]) 09[illegible].

Thompson is being groomed to replace Big Dribe, a former PBA player who resigned to the United States after last season's playoffs.

ESPN signs contract with Augusta Masters

THE AUGUSTA Masters, one of golf's four majors, hopes to hit the ratings to appeal to the Asian fan base, signing an exclusive television contract with cable giant ESPN STAR Sports this year's opening.

The cable channel has also bagged the broadcast rights for the US Open.

ESPN STAR promises a comprehensive coverage of the US Masters, which could be the venue for what a shaping up to be a battle royale for the No. 1 spot among current leader Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Ernie Els.

Archived footage from some of the highlight moments of the tournament will also be shown.

ESPN STAR is hoping to bank on the rise of popularity of the sport in the region.

More importantly, Asia has experienced a bumper of talents lately with several players making big their mark in the big PGA tournaments. The cable channel's coverage of the Masters will begin April 7-10.

Murad should repent for his 'sins' against Pacquiao

CLEAN LIVING

Manuels & Alips

OSE compelling reason why I sort of walked away from give boxing is because of the promises of glib-tongued and conniving promoters like Manuel Morales and the new Jersey-based wheeler-dealer who promotes Manny Pacquiao's most recent fights.

In my view, Pacquiao lost to Morales's [illegible] Morales by a 12-round unanimous decision in Las Vegas (not Sunday because of the backstage machinations [subtle double-crossed?] of Manuel Muhammad.

First, why did Muhammad allow Morales to use the gloves of his choice (Winning)—and not what Pacquiao has been using (Cleto's own)—since he benefited the most[illegible] career in the United States in 2003? Why didn't Muhammad insist on the type of gloves which Pacquiao has been to[illegible] with if he was truly protecting the interest of the Filipino fighter?

Pacquiao said he used the different brand of gloves because Manuel had signed a contract with fight organizers Bob Arum of Top Rank[illegible], agreeing with what Morales liked which did not sit well with Pacquiao's famous American trainer Freddie Roach.

Manuel Muhammad's signed the deal without asking anybody from our camp[illegible] Roach, who several months ago had a falling out with Muhammad, accusing the glib-tongued promoter of financial fraud, saying he was divested of $[illegible] when Pacquiao stopped Marco Antonio Barrera, also of Mexico, in November 2003.

Yesterday, Pacquiao also claimed he was shortchanged by Muhammad from his share of the pay-per-view TV proceeds, saying Muhammad received more than $2 million while getting nothing while he fought his butt off[illegible] fighting atop the ring.

Gen. Bernardito Muhammad also protested at The Star in Taguig a refusal tip-off of a fight, a million peso card which pitted Fabian Maldonado, an undistinguished boxer from Thailand, against Jacob Matlala of Lesotho. In response, Pacquiao stopped Dahmen in just four rounds even though the fight was billed to go the distance.

The insanity has dominated the lamentable comparisons from 1993 in Manila and the 2003 in Kuala Lumpur. In the Manila edition, the RP just took away half of the 16 gold medals at stake.

Taekwondo, which will be held in Cebu City in one of the sports disciplines where the country is expected to put up a big fight, also features Gash and Judo, boxing, wushu and basketball.

Meanwhile, the national basketball team has still not started its training camp but officials are confident their top-ranked Indonesian players will be there. But they haven't yet received head coach Rincon Asanza.

"I think it's a reality check on our part," Asanza said the business during the break to maximize lucid last week. "We realized that we still have a lot to work on in terms of improving our game."

Only Lloyd Tiamzon managed to squeeze out a victory in the men's singles, while the [illegible] Tiamzon teaming mates of siblings Erwin and Rosemarie Ammerlan, and Ronnie and Paolo Chisbara split their matches in the mixed doubles.

Asanza said the 14-man team will be finally start its training March 29 with a rigid all-week program at the Chinkadliffe and the Philsports.

The chasers for a SEA Games gold, according to the 34-year-old coach, remain slim as the SEAG Federation scrapped the team event, leaving nationals to struggle against world-class Indonesians and Malaysians in the men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles.

Time based promotions will also be launched in two weeks.

"We're having a nationwide contest for people to come up with the Games' slogan and theme song for the Philippine staple, our official mascot," said Santiago. "We will announce the details soon."

Rockets freeze Heat; Cavs destroy Pistons

HOUSTON—Tracy McGrady scored 26 points and the Houston Rockets registered a big victory Tuesday, **pausing a halt to the Miami Heat's** stretching 13-game winning **streak with an 84-82 thriller.**

Jamal Mashburn added 16 points, Jim Jackson added 12 and Houston's Cuttino Mobley gave the Rockets a lift off the bench to keep the NBA's top-scoring offensive of Shaquille O'Neal and Dwyane Wade in check.

McGrady, who scored a total of 32 points and shot just 40 percent in the previous two games, struggled again to find his shot, going 9-of-27, but made all the clutch plays down the stretch.

O'Neal led Miami with 23 points and 10 rebounds, getting the best of his personal rivalry with Yao Ming, who added 20 on just 4-of-16 shooting.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 20 and got some needy needed help from the Cavaliers bench to give them the much Brendan Malone a win in his first game, 91-76, over the Detroit Pistons.

"He played great tonight," Malone said. "His defensive intensity was great against one of the best teams in the NBA."

Malone took over after Paul Silas was fired Monday.

He gave more playing time to Anderson Varejao and rather reserves, and it paid off. Varejao scored 11 and played tough defense with a couple blocks that ignited Cleveland.

The win ended a three-game losing streak for the Cavaliers and snapped the Pistons' five-game winning streak.

In San Antonio, Nets Jersey Vince Carter scored 23 points to give the Nets a 98-91 victory with over the Antonio Pacers and its longest winning streak of the season.

Rookie center Nenad Krstic scored seven of his 21 points during a 14-2 run that put the Nets in control midway through the final period, as New Jersey won its fifth straight game.

Carter and Krstic first provided enough offense the rest of the way to give New Jersey a sweep of their back-to-back set against the Pacers.

The Nets gained a game on Indiana, which began the night in seventh place in the East, and moved within one game of Philadelphia for eighth place. With 34 games remaining, the Nets' playoff hopes are very much alive.

In Atlanta, Jermaine Jamaharrie had 40 points and 13 rebounds to help the Phoenix Suns during the Hawks, 108-94, and become the ninth NBA team to score 50 points following a 50-loss season.

NBA Rookieinnie controlling the late and threw Nash handing are 11 points, the Suns improved the league's best road record to 27-7 with an eighth straight victory outside Phoenix. They have more three of three overall.

Marcus Haslem had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Suns, who ran on the franchise record Wednesday night in Charlotte for consecutive road wins, a mark set in 1997-98 and matched the next season.

The Hawks, who were led by Al Harrington's 30 points, fell to 26-34. They were 8-21 at home.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur had 27 points and 16 rebounds and the Utah Jazz handed the Los Angeles Lakers their sixth straight loss, 131-107, despite 48 points from Kobe Bryant.

The Jazz snapped a season-long three-game losing streak and were the season series against the Lakers for the first time since 1999, taking three of four games.

Bryant made nine of 15 triples, but missed all four of his 3-pointers in the fourth while scoring just four points.

Los Angeles, which fell 4½ games behind Denver for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference, continued its longest losing streak since 1993-94—the last time the Lakers missed the playoffs.

In Denver, Jeraheer Johnson had 20 points, Eduardo Nájera added 16 and the Nuggets ran away in fourth straight opening, crushing Washington, 107-96.

The Nuggets have been the NBA's hottest team since the All-Star break and gave the Wizards a glimpse of why at both ends. Denver had six players in double figures, shot 53 percent, had 27 assists, scored 30 points on the break and forced 20 turnovers.

The Nuggets are 19-5 since coach George Karl took over and have seen 11 of 13 to move three games ahead of Minnesota for the final Western Conference playoff spot. Denver is just two games behind Memphis for seventh place.

Billups Antawn led the Wizards with 20 points, but didn't get much help.

In Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 29 points and Luke Ridnour added a career-high 23 to lead the SuperSonics over the Milwaukee Bucks, 92-84.

Jason Terry in Sacramento, California, Jimmy Thomas had 24 points and nine rebounds in his best game with the Kings, and coach Rick Adelman got his 700th career victory, 112-93, against his former team, the Portland Trail Blazers.

AP

SHAQUILLE O'Neal dominated Yao Ming, but the Heat still lost.

Bonds out, midseason return eyed

NEW YORK—Barry Bonds might not resume his pursuit of Hank Aaron's home run record this season.

Bonds said Monday his sore and will take at least six weeks for the Chicago Cubs.

Bonds returned to the San Francisco Giants' spring training camp in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Tuesday after having a second knee operation and said he was physically and mentally "done," and blamed the media for at least part of his frustration.

"I'm tired of my kids crying. You wanted me to jump off a bridge, I finally did," Bonds said. "You finally brought me and my family down. So now go pick a different person."

Bonds, 40, said his career homers are 11 short of Babe Ruth's record and 52 behind Aaron's, had arthroscopic surgery on his right knee last week.

Bonds said he was tired and disappointed following a session in which he was accused of spitting on the ground. The commentary was leaked and he had two knee operations.

Limiting his head on a comeback and repeatedly saying he was tired, Bonds spoke after a 5 1/2-hour session with trainer trainer Hunt Cone.

"Right now, I'm just going to try to rehab myself to get back to, 'I don't know, hopefully soon season,' hopefully the middle of the season," Bonds said. "I don't know. Right now I'm just going to take things slow."

After Bonds' first operation this winter, Cincinnati said Bonds was expected to be sidelined for six months. All the trainer's surgery and after the second surgery was that Bonds was unlikely to be ready for the season opener.

At Mesa, Arizona, Cubs closer Bo could was hit by a line drive in a game Monday. He lose to another blow to Chicago's pitching staff already shattered by injuries to Kerry Wood and Mark Prior.

Bonnell is wearing a splint and will begin a throwing program soon after the bruising pounding is complete, approximately six weeks.

AP

Tour honors Wimbledon champs

MIAMI—Wimbledon champions Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova were three-time winners at the inaugural Pete Tennis Classic Awards on Tuesday night.

Coming off a year in which he won three Grand Slam events and 11 straight titles, Federer was the men choice for the ATP's Player of the Year. He was also named the Pete Tennis Award by ATPtennis.com users and was named the Stolen Lifting Sportsman of the Year.

Sharapova won WTA Tour Player of the Year after winning her first Grand Slam event at Wimbledon and claiming four titles. The 17-year-old Russian also received the Most Improved award and the Stars' favorite award.

Also in the joint ATP and WTA Tour ceremony, Andy Roddick received the Arthur Ashe Humanitarian of the Year Award; Serena Williams and Justine Henin were the Comeback Players of the Year. The ATP's Most Improved award went to Joachim Johansson, and Tatiana Golovin and Florian Mayer were named Newcomers of the Year.

Meanwhile, Serena Williams

SHARAPOVA: Player of the year, most improved and fan favorite.

talked about a lot of things in a press conference about the NASDAQ 100 Open.

But when the subject switched to Sharapova, the conversation stalled. "Williams claimed she only regularly remembered the first time she played Sharapova—at Key Biscayne last year.

"I don't think you realize, I have a fashion company," Williams said. "I'm working on a outfit because for the fall. I'm an actress. I'm working on an interview series, on different projects. I'm working on so much stuff."

Nikita giggle she added, "I don't really think about other people, because I have to focus on me. I don't think about Sharapova or anyone else on the tour. I don't have time."

Potential obstacles for Williams at Key Biscayne will be Sharapova, the other fourteen seeded in the top 16 and two Belgians... Kim Clijsters, who won at Indian Wells last week, and Justine Henin-Hardenne, who has recovered from viral and knee ailments and is scheduled to play in her first tournament since the US Open. Amelie Mauresmo is seeded No. 2.

The fourth-field includes top-ranked Pedroni and defending champion Roddick. The only top players absent in either draw are No. 1-ranked Lindsay Davenport, extending her scheduled due to her history of knee trouble, and No. 2 Lleyton Hewitt, sidelined with sore toes.

AP

'Big Four' headline golf cast

TORONTO—The Players' Championship, widely regarded as golf's unofficial 19th major, has attracted the world's top 14 players in the TPC at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida this week.

Leading the fifth-contenders at Thursday's first round on one of the world's most demanding courses will be the "Big Four" of Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson, all with wins in the bag this season.

"This is one of the players's championships," said Woods, who won the title in 2001. "People call it the fifth major and it takes that kind of mentality and that kind of perseverance to win on the TPC at Sawgrass.

"It's a great tournament, probably one of the strongest fields we'll have all year.

"You play against the best players on this golf course under these type of conditions. This is a test, look at it out."

First $6 million purse was not enough to make competitive three...the No. 1 world ranking could change hands for the third time this season, adding extra motivation to the week.

Separated by hairlines in the rankings, No. 2 Woodward No. 3 Els could lower on Sunday with the top spot that Singh reclaimed with a second-place finish at last week's Bay Hill International.

Despite the presence of the "Big Four," there are plenty of other players who will hope to challenge this week.

South African Retief Goosen, who was leading by the lone last name by his fellow golfers, ranks high among the contenders.

Defending champion Adam Scott of Australia, also has supporters...while Frederick Pickling Huntington, runner-up at Sawgrass for the last two years and winner of the Honda Classic two weeks ago, will be in confident mood.

Scott, though, may be facing the longest odds as no player in the 30-year history of the event has successfully defended the title.

"It's coincidence, that's all," said Scott.

AP

Bowe Salt Lake fight postponed

SALT LAKE CITY—Riddick Bowe's bout scheduled for Friday night was postponed indefinitely because of contract and refereeing problems.

Bowe, the former heavyweight champion, had been scheduled to fight in the first boxing event held at the Delta Center, but the state boxing commission, Utah Heart Boxing Productions and arena officials announced Tuesday night that it was postponed.

The new date had been discussed and it was not clear whether Bowe would actually fight in the "Night of the Favorite" when it happens.

"In the end, there were too many scheduling conflicts and contractual differences to pull off this event this week," Delta Center vice president of events Brent Mendbach said.

Edward Mendez of Lost Heart Boxing said Tuesday afternoon that details including the contract and who Bowe would fight were still being worked out.

Bowe, 38, started his comeback in September with a second-round knockout of Marcus Rhodes in Bowe's first fight since 1996. Bowe (41-1, 33 knockouts) dropped out of a match in November because of an injury.

Bowe won the undisputed heavyweight championship by beating Evander Holyfield in 1992, but lost the title to Holyfield five following year.

Bowe also served 37 months in prison for kidnapping his first wife and their children in 1998.

AP

Pat scales college coaching summit

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee—the Associate stands alone at the top of 26 college basketball.

The Tennessee coach broke Dean Smith's former victory record Tuesday night, surpassing his 879 in the Lady Vols' 75-59 win over Purdue in the second round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association women's college basketball championship tournament.

Summitt tied Smith at 879 with an easy win over Western Carolina in the first round Sunday night and passed the former North Carolina coach's coach with another convincing victory Summitt improved to 880-171, while Smith won 879-354 when he retired in 1997 after 36 years with the Tar Heels.

"Obviously, to be in the company with Coach Smith, to think about all the people that were a part of those wins, I never thought I'd live this long," Summitt said.

Top-seeded Tennessee (28-4), aiming to win its seventh national title under Summitt, advanced to the fourth-seeded Texas Tech in the semifinals of the Philadelphia Regional on Sunday.

At 52, Summitt's record could stretch well past 1,000 before she retires.

AP

ANNIKA Sorenstam rides a second shot on the third hole during the Pro-Am of the Kraft Nabisco Championship.

Hurting back gives Park major second thoughts

RANCHO MIRAGE, California—South Korea's Grace Park had cited Wednesday to decide if her back injury has healed enough for her to defend the first major of the season, the Kraft Nabisco Championship.

The 25-year-old has not been able to hit a shot since Saturday's third round of the Safeway International in Phoenix and if she cannot make her early tee time for the Pro-Am she will be forced to pull out of Thursday's first round.

"I'm going home all the time and I'm very hopeful that I'll be able to make it," the world No. 2, who underwent acupuncture treatment before playing last week, told reporters on Tuesday.

The final frames of physiotherapy since Sunday but I'm still in pain. I haven't hit a shot since Saturday and if the tournament had been today that I wouldn't have been able to play," she added.

Meanwhile, 31-year-old Michelle Wie hopes to improve on her fourth-place finish in this event 12 months ago.

"My goal is to hopefully finish higher than last year," said Wie, who is playing in her third LPGA event of the season.

Reuters

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

Forex deposits in RP hit record high

GMA 7, Cuzon Cablevision sign deal

Sales of pre-owned firms down 18.2%

By Doris C. Dumlao

BUOYED by strong foreign inflows that perked up the peso against the US dollar this year, foreign currencies deposited with the Philippine banking system hit a new historic high of $15.49 billion as of March 9.

"These are due to inflows coming in, particularly those used to buy local stocks. Some are parked with PCIBA temporarily," BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes said.

The March 9 FCDU build-up represented a 12.6-percent jump from the $13.76 billion recorded as end-March last year, which was a record high then. At that time, the peso was sharply depreciating and people did not want to convert their foreign currency into pesos in anticipation of a higher exchange rate.

Over the succeeding months, the rise in FCDU placements continued. It has been on an upward cost in the last three months that the peso was sharply appreciating against the US dollar.

FCDUs, considered as the country's secondary level of foreign exchange reserves, historically attract more deposits whenever the peso is on a freefall against the US dollar. In that situation, people and enterprises with dollar revenues choose to park their funds with FCDUs instead of converting them pesos right away.

In the present case, however, the FCDU build-up is supported by huge foreign investment inflows and remittances. Foreign exchange remittances

FCDU deposits are considered as stable as 65 percent of these consisted of deposits by residents and these are being invested in Philippine sovereign bonds.

The higher build-up in FCDU deposits, however, does not necessarily translate to increased FCDU lending. Borrowers themselves, feeling heroes from the Asian currency turmoil, are averse to dollar loans these days due to the huge foreign exchange risks.

But for the first time since the Asian currency crisis erupted in 1997, the BSP is now keen on easing its foreign exchange regulations to let the market scoop up rising foreign inflows.

Incoming BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the monetary agency was looking at relaxing the overbought limit on banks because the volume of trade had gone up.

The overbought limit, set at 2.5 percent of a bank's unimpaired capital or $5 million whichever is lower, refers to the amount of US dollars that a bank is allowed to keep.

Prior to the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, the allowable overbought position was as high as 20 percent of a bank's unimpaired capital. The limit was tightened when the crisis erupted to stop attempts to curb speculative attacks against the local currency.

Strategic and liquidity in the Philippine Dealing System, the spot foreign exchange market, had now improved, with daily value turnover hitting $300-$400 million from an average of only $200 million in the past years.

PNOC finalizes sale of Malampaya stake

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-OWNED Philippine National Oil Co. Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) is selling 45 percent of its 50-percent stake in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas to Power Project to a Korean consortium led by GS International Corp.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, the state firm said the sale of the Malampaya stake to the group was approved in a meeting last Monday by the PNOC and PNOC-EC boards and endorsed to the Privatization Council immediately after that.

The Privatization Council approved sale Tuesday.

However, despite the approval, the sale is not yet considered consummated as the other members of the Malampaya consortium can still challenge the Korean group's offer for PNOC-EC's stake in the natural gas field.

Aside from PNOC-EC, other members of the consortium are Shell Philippines Exploration BV (SPEX) and Chevron Texaco Philippines, each having a 45-percent stake in the Malampaya project.

PNOC-EC said the two consortium members could "match the offer of [a International] Corp. if they wish to acquire a proportion or the shares of the interest being privatized."

PNOC-EC president Yolando Mabalac said in a telephone interview yesterday that SPEX

PAGE B3

March trade fair sales up 111% to P122M

By Rocnel M. Domingo

THE NATIONAL Trade Fair, the country's biggest domestic exhibition for small and medium enterprises, yielded P122.1 million in total sales, or 111 percent higher than the P57.8 million posted in 2004.

The Department of Trade and Industry reported that this year's fair, held March 9-13, attracted some 4,000 buyers and businesses as well as 35,000 visitors.

At least 200 SMEs from 17 regions were featured in this year's NTF. The businesses from Region 7 (Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor) earned the highest sales (P5.3 million).

Exhibitors from Region 3 or Central Luzon ranked second with P4.8 million in earnings. Region 11, or Southern Mindanao, earned P4.7 million.

Organized by the DTI's Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, the five-day annual serves as a platform for SMEs to establish contacts with retail giants and international buyers.

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila assisted the secretary and Cebu executive director, said the event also strengthened the government's export strategy.

The NTF featured exhibits on fashion accessories, home furnishings and housewares, gifts, arts and crafts, and food products.

The top sellers were housewares and home décor from Negros Oriental Arts and Heritage, which generated a total P41.58 million sales.

Second bestseller was the kitchen and tableware products from Casamoda Handicrafts based in Davao City, which yielded P9.92 million. Arts and crafts products from Aliguyon Handicraft in Davao was third with P7.97 million sales.

"We hope that eventually these products find their niche in the international market and that these small firms expand their collaboration with the retailers, wholesalers and foreign buyers they met in NTF," Favila said.

He said Cebu was looking forward to "graduating" the SMEs from the grassroots level to becoming exporters.

Government data show that SMEs generate 32 percent of the country's gross domestic product, and 70 percent of employment opportunities. SMEs represent 99 percent of all of the country's exporters.

Belle Corp. eyes sale of Manila Bay property

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MEMBERS of the Belle Corp. board of directors approved the sale of the property located along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

Belle Corp. is willing to seven-hectare reclaimed property in the Manila Bay area to trim down its P3.7-billion debt.

Willy Ocier, Belle vice chairman, said that the company's board of directors approved the sale of the property located along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

The sale is in line with the company's thrust to focus on residential developments, tourism, entertainment and resthouse center development.

Belle Bay City Corp. (BBCC), a 60-percent owned subsidiary of Belle, used to be part of reclamation that created 116 hectares of reclaimed land along Roxas Boulevard.

A mixed-use complex was supposed to be put up on the property.

But due to the weakness in the economy, shareholders decided to abandon the BBCC and subdivide the property among themselves. Belle received seven hectares.

"The property which has commercial potentials, is considered a non-core asset... Belle aims to focus on its core development segments," Eugenio Vigilia Jr., as well as expand its real estate ventures in non-urban areas," Ocier told the investors. "Valuation and appraisal studies will be undertaken immediately. Belle aims to take advantage of continued investor confidence to further improve its financial condition."

The company hopes to complete the sale this year since the property market is showing signs of recovery, Ocier said.

Belle will have to come up with a figure for the property.

Ocier also said that Belle had managed to trim its debt from P10 billion in 1997 to P3.7 billion to date.

"Belle's financial woes started in 1997 when various companies contracted to build our debt over the years."

Also, Belle's board approved a capital asset reorganization to reduce its P5.4 billion retained earnings deficit.

A deficit limits a company's ability to issue dividends to its shareholders.

Belle would now apply the company's additional paid-in capital worth P3.269 billion to bring down its P5.4-billion retained earnings deficit to P2.133 billion.

Sun taps China firm for $200-M rollout

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN CELLULAR has tapped Chinese firm Huawei Technologies Inc. to undertake the network's $200 million expansion project, boosting about 700 additional cellular sites, to boost the mobile carrier's coverage and reach.

Huawei Technologies is one of the largest telecommunications equipment producer and the seventh largest electronics company in China.

The Chinese company said it wanted to do aggressive business in the Philippines and is currently in talks with all major telco players for supplies and contracts.

The 700 additional cellular sites would boost Sun Cellular's network to about 2,000 sites from the present 1,300.

The expansion would allow the third player in the digital telecom sector to accommodate its more as it is expected to increase from the current capacity of about 2 million.

Sun Cellular is the trade name of Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc., a unit of Digitel Telecommunications Philippines Inc. Lucio Tan Group and is the president of the firm.

"The installation of additional 700 cellular sites forms part of the expansion [project]," a Digitel official said. "It could increase about half of the $200-million budget."

LANCE Cuberquez

By the end of February, Sun Cellular expected to have 1.7 million customers, largely drawn by the popularity of its 24/7 unlimited call and text subscription plan, the official said.

For P388 a month or P4.88 for 7 days, Sun subscribers may enjoy unlimited services.

The Cuberquez earlier recently expanded its 24/7 menu by adding e-mail and internet surfing network (net plus of P80 for 7 days and P150 for one month).

Before the buffet deal was launched in October last year, Sun Cellular had only about 700,000 customers. The company said that, since then, it had been adding 6,000 subscribers each day.

Sun Cellular said if it could maintain the take-up trend, it could add 2 million customers between March and December. By year-end, it expects to have more than 4 million subscribers by the end of the year.

In Art Huawei, the company said it was also negotiating with the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Bayan Telecommunications Phils. Inc.

Aaron Liu, an official of Huawei's local unit, said that the company would like to expand in the Philippines, given the aggressive competition in the telco sector.

Huawei was put up only in 1988, but it had become a strong multinational company in less than 20 years.

Last year, the company posted $5.6 billion in revenues, up 11% percent against the previous year.

Of its total sales, $2.3 billion came from overseas. Its net profit in 2004 stood at $450.1 million.

Huawei has 22,000 people, about 45 percent of whom are engaged in research and development.

Huawei has six research centers in China and overseas facilities in the United States, Russia, India and Sweden.

DTI wants piece of S. Korea market

THE GOVERNMENT is promoting the country as a destination for foreigners seeking cosmetic surgery after a study has shown the viability of promoting such services to the South Korean market, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

In a statement, the DTI said that for Philippine trade and investment Group to tend learned that cosmetic surgery was popular among Korean women.

According to the study, most of the women want to have facial contours, eyelids (blepharoplasty), and enhance their cheeks, noses, lips and breasts.

PTIC-Seoul's study also revealed that three out of five Korean women aged 24 to 35 had undergone cosmetic surgery at least once. It also shows that four out of five women are thinking of having two more operations.

The agency said the women could be drawn to the Philippines for their country's needs. The agency said such procedures cost between $3,000 and $2,500 per operation in South Korea while it costs only $700 here.

Trade Secretary Juan D. Santos said the DTI had adopted a business model that linked Philippine-based cosmetic surgeons and Korean clients for an travel agents. The Korean travel agencies are being urged to include such services in their vacation packages.

"The conceptualization of this business model is in line with the DTI's thrust to develop globally competitive Philippine service industries in health and wellness, retirement and leisure, information technology and logistics," Santos said.

The DTI official added that the business model was being implemented through a memorandum of agreement between the Ophthalmic Consultants Philippines Co.—better known as Eye Republic—and the Manila-based Korean travel agency Hugo Tour.

Under the two-year pact, Eye Republic—which is a network of ophthalmology clinics in the country—would provide their services to Korean patients who need eye and cosmetic surgery here.

For its part, Hugo Tour would provide all the needs for medical tourism between South Korea and the Philippines.

"This is the first working business model of a specific cosmetic surgery product targeting a niche market," Santos said.

"The success of its application would serve as basis for expanding the coverage of contract services to include weight reducing procedures and spa services," he added. *Rocnel M. Domingo*

IT sector seen to turn into $10-B industry

By Doris C. Dumlao

FINANCE Secretary Cesar Purisima said investments in the information technology services sector, as well as tourism, mining and agriculture, are key enterprise areas which the Philippines could harness, earning each into $10-billion industries over the next six years.

"If our population were to [reach] 100 million in six years time, we want our per capita to be $1,000, and that means that the GDP (gross domestic product) of the country should be $100 billion," Purisima said in a recent speech at the Executive International Chamber of Commerce.

"We are presently at about $80 billion (GDP) so we need to grow over the next six years so that we can reach $100 billion," Purisima said during a continental dinner for incoming Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

But Purisima said the country would not be able to grow with domestic savings alone. It should instead attract foreign investments.

He said Tetangco would have to do a good job in the BSP by keeping the exchange rate stable. Purisima said he also wants in order to keep inflation and interest rates at reasonable levels.

"More than that, we need businessmen inside the Philippines as 'entrepots,' a haven for entrepreneurs," he said, urging businessmen to explore opportunities in the free sectors. "We need more of our money in businesses than... in our high economy."

By the time Tetangco arrives, Purisima, for instance, can easily shed P100 billion in annual revenue, Purisima says.

"Right now, tourism is a $2.3-billion industry," said Purisima, basing the figure on the 2.3 million arrivals each year. "In six years time, there's no reason why we shouldn't get 10 million tourists. Our neighbors Malaysia and Thailand get that many right now, if not more so. Why shouldn't we, when we have better natural resources?"

Another potential growth area is the IT services. Purisima said that the call center business had turned into a $1-billion industry.

"If we get a million more employed in this industry, that can easily turn into a $10-billion industry," he said. "IT has high value added, and I think our challenge there is to move from data encoding and call centers all the way to software development."

Being the fifth most mineralized country in the world, Purisima said mining could also turn out to be a $10-billion industry in six years.

Agriculture, he also said, could be another major growth area due to the Philippines' proximity to China, the world's biggest consumer.

"The Chinese have somewhere the timeframe in the consumption of everything, except fuel and automobile," he said. "In the consumption of chicken, corn and other foods, they are now number one in the world. Why am I mentioning this? We are right at the doorstep of the fastest growing country in the world. So, clearly, agriculture is going to be another $10-billion potential."

But these things to be realized, Purisima said, the country's fiscal position must be balanced and more rates collected. The revenue must go into infrastructure, as well as education, health care and other social services.

"The reduction is to pay more taxes so more we can create jobs, employ resources to create more businesses," he said.

GMA 7, Guam Cablevision sign deal

From page B1

to GMA Network's popular news and public affairs and general entertainment programs that have made the Network the No. 1 TV station in the nation.

The channel showcases GMA's high-rating programs including Filipino primetime newscast "24 Oras", longest running newsmagazine show "Imbestigador", the longest running Filipino pop show "Bubble Gang"; the No. 1 Filipino fantasy series "Mulawin"; Filipino public affairs show "Imbestigador" and the official Filipino Channel TV "I.C.H."

GMA Network is also set to launch its international channel in the United States next month and is finalizing an agreement with a leading cable company there. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Creditor OKs restructuring of Citra loan

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE National Bank has approved the restructuring of Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp.'s P134 million loan.

The restructuring program calls for the extension of the repayment period to six years starting 2006.

Last year, Land Bank of the Philippines also shared the restructuring of its P80-million exposure in Citra up to 2008.

The joint venture of Philippine National Construction Corp. and Indonesian firm PT Citra Marga Nusaphala Persada built P1 billion to build the Metro Manila Skyway project in 1995, a 42-km elevated highway from Makati to Bicutan.

About 70 percent of the amount was financed through borrowings from local and foreign creditors.

Sources said that only the two banks remaining outstanding exposures to the skyway project. The other Citra creditors earlier chose to cut the P134-million stand-by facility that the company opened five years ago.

As part of the restructuring, PNB had agreed to reduce the principal amortization by 1.2 percent or by about $1.43 million.

The Citra loans had turned sour, leaving PNB and Land Bank with no other choice but to agree to restructure the obligations.

PNB started collecting 2 percent of the principal debt on March 15. The principal will have to be paid every quarter.

By 2006, the servicing of the principal debt will go up to 3.75 percent, increasing to 4 percent by the third year, to 4.5 percent on the fourth year and to 4.75 percent on the fifth year by 2009.

By the end of the fifth year, Citra would have settled 80 percent of its obligations with PNB.

The remaining 20 percent will be collected in 2010 to be divided equally into quarterly payments.

Citra's contract with the government supposedly involved three stages, which when completed, should have provided an elevated highway from Makati City all the way to Alabang while the ground level Osmeña Road in Alabang and Magallanes to Buendia should have been rehabilitated.

BSP may tighten monetary policies

By Doris C. Dumlao

APPARENTLY bowing to pressures arising from the upturned in consumer-spending until the recent increase in the US Federal Reserve rates, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday hinted at the need for monetary tightening soon.

The US Fed on Tuesday raised its overnight funds rate by another 25 basis points to 2.75 percent, the seventh quarterly consecutive increase since it began lowering interest rates to curb deflationary pressures.

"The Fed hike was widely expected. Global inflationary tendencies point to higher interest rates abroad," BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

"The implications are on the interest rate differentials and the concomitant impact on the exchange rate. This will be covered in the assessments of the inflation outlook," he said.

Tetangco said the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board was closely watching another major factor that could aggravate the upturned in consumer prices—the demand-pull pressures or spending sprees by consumers.

"While supply factors remain the main source of price pressures, we need to make sure that any emerging demand-related pressures are appropriately addressed," Tetangco said.

Aside from increasing its own overnight policy rates—which have been kept at the same level since July 2003—the BSP also has the option of increasing the reserve requirement on banks.

The BSP's overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase rate stands at 6.75 percent while the overnight lending or repurchase rate is at 9 percent.

With higher oil prices exerting inflationary pressure in the US, it is somewhat relentless that US Fed's interest rates will continue to rise at a measured pace. A former US central bank official Alan Binder even predicted that short-term rates might go up not by one quarter percent but by one half percent in order to fight inflation pressures.

Higher short-term interest rates tend to discourage consumer spending as they translate to higher monthly payments on credit card payments.

The International Monetary Fund, in a recent country report, said the BSP must start raising its interest rates "to guide inflationary pressures down," projecting that inflation will again cover above the official ceiling of 5.5 percent this year.

In its full report on the 2004 Article IV consultations with the Philippine government released Tuesday, the IMF said about a third of the increase in the Philippine inflation rate since mid-2003 was due to factors other than identifiable supply side pressures.

"Indicators of demand-side pressures and slack also suggested that the situation might be turning," the report said.

The Washington-based monetary institution of emergency aid noted that retail sales growth is "strong."

"However, concerns about the macroeconomic framework remain paramount in the minds of market participants, given unwinding fiscal problem. In this light, a rate increase would send a positive signal about the BSP's commitment to the inflation target," the report said.

A BOOST TO THIS EXPORT SECTOR
The country's total exports are expected to grow at double-digit levels in the next two years and hit $38 billion by 2006. This should foster economic growth, increase dollar inflows and generate employment. To boost export promotion and development, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is extending a grant worth P15.5 million to the Export Development Council (EDC). BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura and Trade Secretary Juan Santos look at the agreement covering the grant after the signing. With them are (from left): BSP Deputy Governors Armando L. Ibarola and Amando M. Tetangco Jr., BSP director Celia Reyes-Dee, EDC executive director Fernando Calo; Confederation of Philippine Exporters president Sergio Ortiz-Luis, and BSP Assistant Governor Diwa Guinigundo.

Mirant, Iloilo LGU ink deal on coal-fired plant

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Mirant Global Corp. (MGC) and the municipal government of Barotac Viejo in Iloilo have signed a memorandum of understanding on the construction of a 100-megawatt coal-fired plant in the town amid opposition from church and environmental groups.

Barotac Viejo Mayor Raoul Tejada and Mirant Americas, MGC vice president for Finance and new business, recently signed the four-page MOU in Barotac Viejo to 6.3 km south of Iloilo City.

Under the agreement, Barotac Viejo will accept the power from its developing 200 proposed project site. The municipality will also allow the temporary use of its facilities and other assistance in the implementation of the project.

MGC to start soil design, build and operate the coal plant, estimated to cost from $100-$120 million, and assist in the "development of the economy" and "local infrastructure."

MGC is a joint venture between Mirant Philippines and Global Gentri Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of the Ayala Corp. group.

The power firm is planning to put up the coal-fired plant in the compound of San Francisco Barangay in Barotac Viejo.

In the MOU, the two parties cited the need for an increase in the installed capacity on Panay Island to offset the projected power supply deficit that energy officials said would start in mid-2006 if no new power plants.

Project proponents said that during the power summit in Iloilo on Nov. 26 last year, "it was the consensus that the most feasible solution" to the power problem was the putting up of a coal-fired plant.

The MOU was signed after the village councils of Santiago and San Francisco and the municipal council passed separate resolutions endorsing the project.

Tourism campaign focuses on Japanese travelers

(CONT. FROM PAGE B1)

DOT? so strengthening the Philippines' position as a favored tourist and holiday destination, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has begun an aggressive one-on-one specific crusade in the Japanese market.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano says Japan is the Philippines' second largest economy source of visitor arrivals, with 561,307 arrivals in 2004. For 2005, the DOT is aiming for 481,200 visitor arrivals from Japan, a 5-percent growth rate. Its objective is to reach 1.6 million arrivals in 2006, or an average growth rate of 28 percent in four years.

"Our intend to be the market leader in the Asian by 2006, with a 1.5 percent market share of Japanese arrivals in Asian," he declares.

According to Durano, Japan pose a tremendous tourism potential, as it is the world's second largest economy and has one of the highest per capita GDP (gross domestic product). It is also one of the biggest sources of the world's outbound travelers, with 13.3 million in 2003. Japanese tourist also rank among the biggest tourist spenders worldwide, in 2003 alone, they spend some $26.7 billion.

Durano earlier ordered the creation of marketing center to execute and monitor the DOT's market-specific campaigns, established China, Japan, Korea, and the Association market. An exhaustive market research by specialists in these priority markets was conducted to locate the first market segments and understand their peculiar needs and preferences. Industry players specializing in these markets were also consulted to validate the outputs of the research.

Three market-specific campaigns share two common elements: they employ advertising materials in the target country's native language and use local media channels for distribution. For Japan, the campaign depicts the Philippines as "Paradise Based Islands," as studies showed that the words "resort" and "islands" are top positive images in the minds of Japanese tourists.

A key element in the Philippines' marketing efforts in Japan is its participation in WKSI Expo 2005 in Aichi, Japan.

The World Expo, which will run from March 25 to Sept. 25, revolves around the theme "Nature's Wisdom" and highlights the need to promote sustainable development that is harmonious with the environment. Being the first world exposition of the 21st century, it is expected to attract people from all over the world and create an excellent platform for addressing serious environmental issues and economy concerns.

During the World Expo, the Philippines will operate its own pavilion and the DOT expects at least 1.3 million visitors, predominantly Japanese. The attraction, which uses the museum to inspire, is for all its design and creative elements, around the thematic concept of "Lihang: Souls of Life." The pavilion will exhibit various aspects of Philippine life and culture, from its world-class cuisine and export products, to the "Best Practices" and success stories in environmental conservation of selected Philippine communities.

PNOC finalizes sale of Malampaya stake

(Story on page B3)

and Chevron Texaco would be given 15 days upon receipt of information about the sale to make their offers.

If no offer would be made during that period, he said the sale would be considered final and Shell would become 100-percent owner of the project.

The Korean group should also fulfill the terms and conditions contained in the farm-in agreement that the PNOC and PNOC-EC boards approved for the sale of the Malampaya stake.

The SC International-led Korean consortium is composed of Korea Gas Corp., Hanjung Industrial and Seoul City Gas Co.

Privatizing PNOC-EC's interest in Malampaya was one of the conditions that the national government set for the state firm in 1999 when it was given full guarantee on a $175-million loan.

Considering the potential of the natural gas project, however, negotiations were conducted between the department of energy and oil firms to consider a compromise that would allow PNOC-EC to fulfill that condition while maximizing some cash to be concentrated.

A series of negotiations with then finance secretaries Jose Isidro Camacho and Juanita Amatong yielded the idea of selling just 4.6 percent of the Malampaya stake and not the entire 10 percent.

The sale of the 4.6 percent stake would not only fulfill the condition for the government guarantee but would also raise cash to pare down some of the state firm's debts and finance further oil and gas exploration efforts.

"PNOC-EC can pull down its interest to pay down the debt that it borrowed in 1999 and to fulfill its condition of the national government's national guarantee. But it will also retain 1.1 percent, which will allow it to continue to benefit from the upside potential of owning an interest in th Malampaya consortium," Finance Energy Secretary Vincent Perez had said in an earlier interview.

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
April 7, 2005

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article III of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City, Metro Manila, on Thursday, 07 April 2005, at 9:00 o'clock in the morning, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stockholders on March 25, 2004
5. Reading of Annual Report and Approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of 31 December 2004 incorporated in the Annual Report
6. Approval and Confirmation of all Acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI
7. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors
8. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
9. Directors' Matters
10. Other Matters

In accordance with Article XII of the said By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from March 8, 2005 to April 7, 2005. Only Stockholders of record as of March 8, 2005 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the said meeting.

It is will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 16th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 5:00 P.M. of March 28, 2005. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 30, 2005 at 4:00 P.M.

Where signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Sgd.: CARLOS B. AQUINO
Vice President &
Corporate Secretary

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CCP has also been awarded by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) as an institution with the highest number of accredited programs with topmost ratings.

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33 Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City
Tel. 715-8170 Fax. 715-2840 Web: www.ccp.edu.ph

Lipa delicacies, Pen chocolates, Bulacan pigeon and other indulgences

Maggie Aglibut

Ah, the joy of discovering 'cuchintang puti' at a Batangas public market!

SALAD of cherry tomatoes and avocado

ASPARAGUS garlic soup with mascarpone cream

LAST WEEK in Lipa (my weekends ago to celebrate the birthday of my nephew Emilio at the beautiful abidemore of La Finca Puerto and Country House.

On a trip to the town's public market, which is a must whenever I go, I discovered some of the most delicious Batangas delicacies. Intense and pure in all shapes, colors and sizes, and, to match, some pretty good barako coffee beans.

I even sampled freshly cooked empanadas that I thought was anything that what took my fancy was the cuchintang puti—white cashews with coconut milk served with sinalmak but sweet. This made my trip to Lipa! Not to mention that I handpicked by Cape of La Finca, made a lovely salad with cherry tomatoes and Cebu avocados, tuna and served it with pickled cucumber. Ahhh! Freshly picked lettuce! What a difference it makes! For a meal in Lipa, super-star, call Liz Filoni Hernandez, 09173984077, for confirming pax, ampanada, cashews and tomatoes call Rhoay at 09156295881. for pax and cashews, call Tess, 09192482285.

Sweet indulgence 2

Remember the Chocolate Nights Buffet at the Manila Peninsula last year? Well, there's doing it again! If you liked it then, this episode down it's even better. Gourmet pursuits of the theme is born and imagine this. Chocolate-and-flax chose right before your very eyes! Executive pastry chef Hendi Bettenaan's gastronomy extravaganza is not to be missed. It starts April 8 at The Pen Lobby (tel. 8873400 local 2205).

Pigeon

Mayor Renante Silverio has once again worked his Midas touch, this time on pigeons: lured in this Kawkawlad town in Bulacan. He also brought home a Chinese chef from China who specializes in pigeon marinades. So if you like fried pigeon like those served in Chinese restaurants, this is it for you. And those used being fed to her self until golden brown. It's so appetizing and, at P180 apiece, how can you go wrong? Call Melly at 4159662.

Karen's Kitchen chocolate cakes

In this hi-tech age, you never really know how important those numbers in your mobile phone are until you lose them. I had lost Karen Kitchen's number until just recently retrieved it. As soon as I did, I just had to order their Chocolate Ganache, a cake I had written about sometime ago. If you haven't tried it, then you must. Only 22,000 calories per serving... so very South Beach-appropriate! You could lose three inches in the line of intense calories, the sweet sinful, the most delicious! Call 09052888 or 09173309882.

Please give me a recipe for salad with cherry tomatoes? I see cherry tomatoes all the time in the supermarket.

JUDY SAN JUAN

My mom loves to prepare asparagus soup but it's always done the same way—with shredded chicken flakes. Any suggestions?

MARIFE G

These recipes for cherry tomato salad and asparagus soup are from Diamond Hotel executive chef Raymond Bruni, whose recipes for the dishes he served during my birthday dinner. I particularly raving with readers last week. Chef Bruni makes a tomato salad of cherry tomatoes and avocado with red wine vinaigrette, toasted garlic flakes and blue cheese. Also, his Pieces of Asparagus Soup with Mascarpone Cream is one I'm certain you and your family will enjoy!

Cherry Tomatoes and Avocado Salad

Salad yield: 1 portion

- 30 g Boston lettuce
- 30 g avocado, peeled & sliced
- 25 g cocktail tomatoes
- 30 g blue cheese
- 5 g fried garlic chips (slivered garlic fried in oil until golden)
- 2 g basil leaves
- 20 g tomatoes, cherry

Red wine vinaigrette (2 tbsp red wine vinegar, 2 tbsp olive oil, ¼ tsp thyme or oregano, salt and pepper to taste—whisk ingredients together)

Prepare lettuce leaves. Break medium tree into one pieces and place on top of the tomatoes. Add the cherry tomatoes around. Add blue cheese chunks on top. Drizzle with red wine vinaigrette. Decorate with basil leaves and chopped chives. Add the garlic chips on top.

Puree of Asparagus Soup with Mascarpone Cream

Soup: Yield 2 liters

- 500 g asparagus, cut
- 400 g potatoes
- 2 ltr chicken stock
- 400 ml cream
- 100 g butter
- 2 g salt
- 2 g black pepper, grounded

Sauté shallots in hot olive oil. Add asparagus, but keep some of the tips for garnish. Sweat asparagus a bit and pour in stock. Add potato and let it simmer till tender. Put in a blender and strain. Reboil add cream, seasoning a bit as necessary. Adjust seasoning.

For the individual portion:

- 200ml soup
- 20 g lemon cream
- 10 g mascarpone cheese
- Dill, cream and the tomato puree cheese. Pour the hot soup into soup cup. Top with a big dollop of cheese mixture.

Spanish cooking terms 4

Pachero - stew pot
Perilla (pi'ri) - grilled
Perilla - Rice cooked on a parilleta
Parilleta - a distinct metal pan used to cook paella
Ostrados y Mariscos - fish & shellfish

Filete Rebozado - fish fillet dipped in egg batter and fried
Pimiento - sweet red pepper
Pimiento - pepe'ko

For comments or suggestions, use 0917 8300680

Identity theft is a growing problem

Marivic Belarmino Ghosn

WHAT till you read about what I saw at the online shop.

As I was walking along a busy section of San Juan, I saw scavengers moving out the contents of their garbage. Plastics, glasses and metals were thrown into two sacks.

But what intrigued me were the neatly marked bills and receipts in one of the boxes. They had the familiar logos of the Manila Electric Company (Meralco), Manila Water Company and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company.

One of the scavengers told me that "someone was going to buy the bills and receipts" from them.

I did not ask any further. It was obvious that names, addresses, and other personal information on the receipts would be used and users might include what some call "identity thieves" or persons who collected this type of sensitive information that could be used in scams.

Not so long ago, the telephone directory was the most convenient source of this type of information. Then came the unsolicited, annoying gadget, which the 10 thieves used to decode and copy information from the magnetic strip at the back of credit and automated teller machines (ATM) cards.

And now we hear of resourceful ID theft rings that call sensitive personal information from bank and credit card accounts, Social Security System documents, membership records, collection agencies, etc. The Internet is the most convenient source, but we are an antagonistic employees in the bank, collection agencies and insurance companies.

Evidently, ID thieves don't have any issues concerned, as so speak. They also may need traffic relief. When I heard this from a concerned consumer, I asked a illustrative information officer what was done with traffic aides at the end of the month's regular pension.

At SM, the disposal of traffic aides is centralized—one group mills the aides," wrote the official.

So, next time you fill out forms requiring information about yourself, don't give out more than what is needed. It is also advisable to advise the house help not to give out private information to telephone callers or people who claim they are from some agency or another.

Serious crime

Unfortunately, we poor consumers in the Philippines are vulnerable to identity theft because there's no specific law to control on. In the United States, it is considered a serious crime. Last year alone, of the more than 635,000 complaints received by the US Federal Trade Commission, some 39 percent was related to identity theft.

By the way, the theme of the national consumer protection week held in the US in February centered on preventing identity theft.

Check fraud at DepEd

A former schoolteacher (name withheld) doesn't know where to report the theft of her benefit check representing benefits due her from the Department of Education (DepEd).

She received recently from the United States after being informed that she could claim the check she had been expecting from DepEd. However, when she got to the department, she was told the somebody had already claimed the check. The person presented all necessary documents to prove she was the legitimate claimant.

Send consumer complaints and comments to gbon@email.

GINGER Pampano

PAMPANO Bicol Express

Four original pampano recipes

RENOWNED food expert Cecilia Kalaw, popularly known as "Tita Cely," has come up with four original, easy-to-prepare recipes for pampano, one of the most prized food fishes worldwide.

The much in-demand pampano is now grown commercially in General Santos City in Mindanao, and Bataan and Mindoro through Philsa, an aquaculture program of Jaime Soriano Corporation.

Below, credited with the popular and very spicy Bicol Express, visits the Tita Cely finding fine at the Market! Market in The Fort.

Call 5471721 or 0917 8472811. E-mail ncalpan@yahoo.com.

SINIGANG na Pampano sa Miso

KINIRING na Pampano sa Gatas with Turmeric Ginger

Pampano in Gata with Turmeric Ginger

- 2 c kalamansi juice
- ½ c vinegar
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp ground pepper
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- 1 tbsp minced onion
- 1 tbsp minced tomato
- 1 tbsp minced bell pepper
- 1 tbsp minced chili
- 1 tbsp minced cilantro
- 1 tbsp minced parsley
- 1 tbsp minced basil
- 1 tbsp minced oregano
- 1 tbsp minced thyme
- 1 tbsp minced rosemary
- 1 tbsp minced sage
- 1 tbsp minced marjoram
- 1 tbsp minced tarragon
- 1 tbsp minced dill
- 1 tbsp minced fennel
- 1 tbsp minced anise
- 1 tbsp minced caraway
- 1 tbsp minced cumin
- 1 tbsp minced coriander
- 1 tbsp minced fenugreek
- 1 tbsp minced mustard
- 1 tbsp minced horseradish
- 1 tbsp minced wasabi
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- 1 tbsp minced galangal
- 1 tbsp minced turmeric
- 1 tbsp minced lemongrass
- 1 tbsp minced kaffir lime leaf
- 1 tbsp minced pandan leaf
- 1 tbsp minced curry leaf
- 1 tbsp minced saffron
- 1 tbsp minced vanilla
- 1 tbsp minced cinnamon
- 1 tbsp minced nutmeg
- 1 tbsp minced mace
- 1 tbsp minced cloves
- 1 tbsp minced allspice
- 1 tbsp minced star anise
- 1 tbsp minced fennel seed
- 1 tbsp minced anise seed
- 1 tbsp minced caraway seed
- 1 tbsp minced cumin seed
- 1 tbsp minced coriander seed
- 1 tbsp minced fenugreek seed
- 1 tbsp minced mustard seed
- 1 tbsp minced horseradish seed
- 1 tbsp minced wasabi seed
- 1 tbsp minced ginger seed
- 1 tbsp minced galangal seed
- 1 tbsp minced turmeric seed
- 1 tbsp minced lemongrass seed
- 1 tbsp minced kaffir lime leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced pandan leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced curry leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced saffron seed
- 1 tbsp minced vanilla seed
- 1 tbsp minced cinnamon seed
- 1 tbsp minced nutmeg seed
- 1 tbsp minced mace seed
- 1 tbsp minced cloves seed
- 1 tbsp minced allspice seed
- 1 tbsp minced star anise seed

Pampano Bicol Express

- 2 c kalamansi juice
- ½ c vinegar
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp ground pepper
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- 1 tbsp minced onion
- 1 tbsp minced tomato
- 1 tbsp minced bell pepper
- 1 tbsp minced chili
- 1 tbsp minced cilantro
- 1 tbsp minced parsley
- 1 tbsp minced basil
- 1 tbsp minced oregano
- 1 tbsp minced thyme
- 1 tbsp minced rosemary
- 1 tbsp minced sage
- 1 tbsp minced marjoram
- 1 tbsp minced tarragon
- 1 tbsp minced dill
- 1 tbsp minced fennel
- 1 tbsp minced anise
- 1 tbsp minced caraway
- 1 tbsp minced cumin
- 1 tbsp minced coriander
- 1 tbsp minced fenugreek
- 1 tbsp minced mustard
- 1 tbsp minced horseradish
- 1 tbsp minced wasabi
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- 1 tbsp minced galangal
- 1 tbsp minced turmeric
- 1 tbsp minced lemongrass
- 1 tbsp minced kaffir lime leaf
- 1 tbsp minced pandan leaf
- 1 tbsp minced curry leaf
- 1 tbsp minced saffron
- 1 tbsp minced vanilla
- 1 tbsp minced cinnamon
- 1 tbsp minced nutmeg
- 1 tbsp minced mace
- 1 tbsp minced cloves
- 1 tbsp minced allspice
- 1 tbsp minced star anise
- 1 tbsp minced fennel seed
- 1 tbsp minced anise seed
- 1 tbsp minced caraway seed
- 1 tbsp minced cumin seed
- 1 tbsp minced coriander seed
- 1 tbsp minced fenugreek seed
- 1 tbsp minced mustard seed
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- 1 tbsp minced turmeric seed
- 1 tbsp minced lemongrass seed
- 1 tbsp minced kaffir lime leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced pandan leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced curry leaf seed
- 1 tbsp minced saffron seed
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- 1 tbsp minced nutmeg seed
- 1 tbsp minced mace seed
- 1 tbsp minced cloves seed
- 1 tbsp minced allspice seed
- 1 tbsp minced star anise seed